

**BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
21 JUNE 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.  
**£570** to Ashwell Playgroup to assist with room hire costs as outlined in 8.1.1.
- 2.2 **£990** to Magic Moments Preschool to assist with costs for the purchase of a new laptop and furniture for indoor role play as outlined in 8.1.2.
- 2.3 **£250** to Greening Ashwell to assist with publicity, venue hire and tree planting costs as outlined in 8.1.3

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| <p>2.4 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.</p> |
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### **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 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 2021/22. 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 2021/22 is summarised below:

	<b>2020/21 Carry Forward</b>	<b>2021/22 Base Budget</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
<b>Baldock Town</b>	£2,528	£2,400	£4, 928
<b>Baldock East</b>	£1,262	£1,000	£2,262
<b>Arbury</b>	£880	£900	£1,780
<b>Weston &amp; Sandon</b>	£357	£700	£1,057
	£5,027	£5,000	£10,027

## 8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

### 8.1 Grant Applications

#### 8.1.1

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Ashwell Playgroup</b> Funding support to assist with room hire costs for the summer term.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£570
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,750
<b>Match funding</b>	£1,180 from fundraising, donations and a grant (TBC) from the Henry Holborn Trust
<b>Previous support</b>	Yes, in the past 5 years the group has received £700. This was awarded in 2020 to assist with publicity and room hire costs.
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objective:</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

Ashwell Playgroup is seeking funding support from the Baldock & District Committee to assist with venue hire costs for the summer term of the playgroup.

Ashwell Playgroup is a registered charity which has been operating since 1975. The group is made up of 5 Volunteer Committee members, 2 full time paid staff, 3 part time paid staff and 4 volunteers. The playgroup operates 5 days week holding sessions from 8am until 115pm. Like many other charity and community groups, Ashwell Playgroup has been struggling due to the Covid-19 Pandemic with months of closure, reduced numbers attending sessions and reduced opportunity for fundraising. The group did receive funding for room hire costs back in 2020 and the Community Engagement Officer has reminded the group of the need to be self-sufficient and not to rely on the support of funding from the Baldock & District Committee. However, given the Pandemic and its impact on the country over the last 14 months and given that before 2020 the group has only had minor funding support in 2016, 2011 and 2007, clearly shows that in normal circumstances the group is financially sound. The group has secured match funding and the officer recommendation is an award of £570.

8.1.2

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Magic Moments Pre-School</b> Funding support for the purchase of furniture for indoor role play & new laptop.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£990
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,100
<b>Match funding</b>	£110 from fundraising.
<b>Previous support</b>	Yes, in the past 5 years the group has received £250. This was awarded in 2019 to assist with resources for the outdoor play area.
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objective:</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

Magic Moments Preschool are seeking funding support from the Baldock & District Committee to assist with costs for the purchase of a new laptop and new furniture for indoor role play.

Magic Moments Pre-school is a registered charity that has been operating since 1996. The group is made up of 3 Volunteer Committee members and 8 Part time paid staff. The pre-school currently caters for 32 families and operates from Monday to Friday each week during term time. As with numerous organisations, Magic Moments Preschool has been badly affected by the current Pandemic which has reduced their opportunity for fundraising. The preschool has also suffered from a drop in numbers during the Pandemic as well as downtime when the building has been closed during lockdown measures. The group is usually self-sufficient which is demonstrated by the fact that this is only the 3rd time they have approached the Baldock & District Committee for funding. The group received funding in 2011 (£250 for laptop) and in 2019 (£250 for outdoor roleplay equipment). The application is criteria compliant.

8.1.3

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Greening Ashwell</b> Funding support to assist with publicity, venue hire and tree planting costs.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£250
<b>Total project cost</b>	£600
<b>Match funding</b>	£350 from own funds and donations.
<b>Previous support</b>	No, this is a new group that was set up in 2020.
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objective:</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

Greening Ashwell is seeking funding support from the Baldock & District Committee to assist with publicity, room hire and tree planting costs.

Greening Ashwell is a new club that was set up in 2020. The club is made up of 6 Volunteer Committee Members and 30+ volunteers. Greening Ashwell has been set up to reduce the carbon footprint of Ashwell through environmental initiatives such as native tree / hedgerow planting, sowing wildflower areas, conserving native habitats (particularly on public verges, green spaces). The club also aims on protecting trees with more TPO`s, encouraging residents to have wildlife friendly gardens and working with landowners / farmers to plant /restore field hedges / copses around the village. This is a new club so in terms of funding the Community Engagement Officer is recommending a start-up grant of £250 for this initiative. The application is criteria compliant.

8.1.4 **Future Grants**

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 several factors these applications were not in a position to be tabled at the June meeting so have been deferred until a future meeting. Details of the applications are included in the table below:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Funding Requested</b>
Baldock Run Talk Run	This is a group for people who wish to use running 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.
Baldock vs Coronavirus Support Group	This group is seeking to assist those who have been adversely affected by the	Funding requested to be confirmed

	Coronavirus Pandemic. This might include counselling support, careers advice and financial assistance. This group will provide a crucial service in Baldock in the aftermath of the Pandemic	
NESSIE (North Herts Emotional Support in Schools Service)	This group is seeking funding support to provide an urgent counselling service to vulnerable children and families needing support following the latest lockdown. NESSIE is currently inundated with requests for support in Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin. This is high-end need where the children have neurodiversity and have experienced trauma.	Funding requested is still to be confirmed but will be split between Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth Committees based on the families being supported within each area.

## 8.2 Community Engagement Updates

### 8.2.1 Baldock Big Lunch

Following the cancellation of the Baldock Festival and the postponement of the Baldock Beast Half Marathon and Baldock Bike Challenge until later in the year, the Baldock Big Lunch will be the first event to be held in Baldock in 2021.

The Baldock Big Lunch is a national event which was set up by the Eden Project to give people the chance to celebrate community connections and get to know one another a little better.

This will be the ninth year for this popular community event which attracts in the region of 300 people annually. As well as being a key community event in the Baldock calendar, the event also helps to drive footfall for the businesses of the Town.

The Baldock Big Lunch will be held on Baldock High Street on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July. As well as offering a wide variety of food, the event will also include live music and entertainment for all the family.

The Baldock CEO has been assisting the organisers with the Event Plan for the event as well as the paperwork that is required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group (SAG) including Licencing and waste management.

The Baldock CEO has also organised the First Aid for the event and has assisted with the publicity and promotion for The Big Lunch around Baldock and in the surrounding villages.

The Baldock CEO will also provide support on the day of the event assisting with event set up and take down.

#### 8.2.2 Future Events for 2021

The Baldock CEO will continue to work with the Baldock Events Forum and other organisations with their planned events for the remainder of 2021. Support will include advice with event paperwork, support with Event Plan documentation, that is required by North Herts SAG and support with the set up and take down of events as required. Detailed in the table below are the current dates for events planned in 2021.

Date	Event
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	Baldock Cycle Challenge
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> to Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	Balstock Music Festival (Pubs only)
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	Baldock 5km Rat Run
Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> to Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> October	Baldock Chartered Street Fair
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> October	Baldock Beast Half Marathon
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	Baldock Community Fireworks
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	Baldock Christmas Fayre

#### 8.2.3 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 available via the Restart and the Additional Restrictions grants.

#### 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. The latest project to be completed was the wooden floor of the main hall. The group is also looking to replicate the old Fire Station Doors. They have already received advice on this from a Structural Engineer and will seek Landlord consent from NHDC. The Baldock CEO will assist the group to identify funding streams for this project.

#### 8.2.5 Rushden and Radwell Village Halls

The Baldock CEO is assisting both Rushden and Radwell Village Halls to identify funding streams for their respective roof replacement and heating projects. In the case of Rushden Village Hall this may involve a application to the Community Facilities Capital Projects Fund.

### **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. Carry over amounts from the 2020/2021 budgets is £5,027, giving a total budget remaining for the Committee for the 2021/22 financial year of £10,027.

## **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.
- 14.2 The grant application made by Greening Ashwell has the potential to help the Council achieve its objective of Responding to Challenges to the Environment, given the group’s intention to conserve habitats, plant trees, and educate and encourage residents to make wildlife-friendly choices.

## **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.

## **17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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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.