

**BALDOCK COMMITTEE
06 DECEMBER 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 advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement Officer has been involved in.

1.3 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 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 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:

	2020/21 Carry Forward	2021/22 Base Budget	Total Budget
Baldock Town	£1,148	£2,400	£3, 548
Baldock East	£842	£1,000	£1,842
Arbury	£60	£900	£960
Weston & Sandon	£207	£700	£907
	£2,257	£5,000	£7,257

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. 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 able to be tabled at the October meeting so have been deferred until a future meeting. Details of the applications are included in the table below:

Group	Project	Funding Requested
Haven Group	The funding requested is to cover costs for activities planned for those at the Shelter at Templars, Baldock for a period of 6 months.	£1,000
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 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	Funding requested to be confirmed
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	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. This group has been signposted to the Health

	support in Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin. This is high-end need where the children have neurodiversity and have experienced trauma.	Protection Board Covid Recovery Fund by the Baldock Community Engagement Officer. If successful in gaining funding the group will not need to approach the Baldock & District Committee.
Baldock Menopause Group	This group is seeking funding support to assist with room hire costs and publicity costs.	Funding requested is still to be confirmed.
Ashwell Tennis Club	This group is seeking funding support to assist with costs for a new clubhouse. The group will be submitting an application once it has the necessary planning permissions in place. As this is a private club it will not be able to apply for S106 monies.	Funding requested is still to be confirmed.

8.2 Community Engagement Updates

8.2.1 Baldock Big Lunch

The Baldock Big Lunch was due to be held for a ninth time on Sunday 4th July but was unfortunately cancelled just a week before the event due to the ongoing Pandemic and concerns about social distancing. The new date for the event in 2022 was originally Sunday 12th June but this has been amended now to Sunday 5th June to coincide with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

8.2.2 Baldock Chartered Street Fair

The Baldock Chartered Street Fair returned to Baldock at the start of October. The Fair pulled on to the High Street at midnight on Friday 1st October and operated on Saturday 2nd, Sunday 3rd and Monday 4th October.

The Baldock Community Engagement Officer (CEO) was in attendance to oversee the arrival of the Fair and arranged the safety Walk Round with the emergency services prior to the Fair opening to the Public on Saturday 2nd October.

At the close of the Fair, the Baldock CEO organised the safe return of all the street furniture that was removed to allow for the safe arrival of the Fair.

The Baldock Chartered Street Fair was well supported by the residents of the town and passed without incident.

8.2.3 Baldock Beast Half Marathon

The Baldock Beast Half Marathon was held for a ninth time on Sunday 31st October and was supported by 350 runners. The Baldock CEO provided pre-event support in terms of assistance with paperwork required by North Herts Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and also promotion of the event on social media.

In the weeks leading up to the event the Baldock CEO assisted with the advanced warning signage of the route and assisted with the recruitment of marshals for the race.

On race day the Baldock CEO checked the course prior to the race start, provided marshal support at a crucial junction and removed all signage from the course following the close of the race.

The Baldock Beast Half Marathon continues to be a popular event amongst runners and a crucial income generator for the Baldock Events Forum.

The Baldock Beast Half Marathon will be returning to Baldock on Sunday 27th February 2022.

8.2.4 Baldock EcoFest Event

The Baldock CEO provided support to the organisers of the first EcoFest Event in Baldock on Saturday 30th October 2021. The Baldock CEO assisted the organisers with the paperwork as required by North Herts SAG and also suspended the parking bays within the town for the safe set up and use of the traders on the day.

The event was supported by 14 organisations all raising awareness about Environmental Issues and was well attended by residents and visitors to Baldock.

8.2.5 Baldock Remembrance Service

The Baldock CEO supported both the Letchworth & Baldock Remembrance Services in November. The Baldock CEO provided support with all the paperwork required for the event by the North Herts SAG including road closure applications and risk assessments.

The Baldock CEO suspended the parking in the High Street car park to allow more space for the Parade and spectators and to allow for social distancing, and also provided marshal support on the day.

8.2.6 Baldock Community Fireworks

The Baldock Community Fireworks returned to St Marys School for a second time on Sunday 7th November. As well as supporting the event organiser with event paperwork, the Baldock CEO also assisted with the site plan and risk assessment for the event and provided marshal support on the day.

The event was a great success and was attended by 2000 residents from Baldock and the surrounding area. As well as the fireworks, spectators were also treated to songs from the musicals from a London Choir, funfair rides and a food court courtesy of Street Food Heroes.

The event was an income generator for St Marys School PTA and a percentage of the profit from the event will also be donated to local good causes.

8.2.7 Farmers on Christmas Lights Tour

On Saturday 18th December there will be a parade of up to 50 tractors all decorated and lit up for Christmas, visiting Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin. This event is a fundraiser for the Garden House Hospice. The Baldock CEO is providing advice to the organisers regarding the paperwork and licences required and is also assisting with promoting the event on social media.

8.2.8 Baldock Christmas Market

The Baldock Christmas Market event will be returning to Baldock on Saturday 4th December. The event will include live music, funfair rides, community stalls and a food court and will finish with the switch on of the Baldock Christmas Tree Lights. The Baldock CEO has been assisting the group with event planning and will also arrange the suspension of car parking for the event and assist with event set up.

8.2.9 Ashwell Recreation Ground

The Baldock CEO is assisting Ashwell Parish Council to find funding for new play equipment for the recreation ground. The Baldock CEO has identified £26k from S106 Play Space that can be utilised for this project. The Baldock CEO will be meeting with the Parish Council in the coming months to move this project forward. Due to the ongoing Pandemic, it has not yet been possible to set up a meeting amongst all parties but this will be further investigated in 2022.

8.2.10 Support Local - Shopping Initiative

The Baldock CEO is assisting with the roll out of 'Love Your Herts High Street' shopping bags to encourage people to shop locally. Bags will be available at Baldock Community Centre and will also be handed out at local community events including the Baldock Christmas Market.

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. Combined with the carry forward amounts from the 2019/20 financial year, the Committee has £7,257 left to allocate across the 2 remaining meetings.

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.

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.