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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE MAIN HALL, BALDOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON MONDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Jim McNally (Chair), Councillor Michael Muir (Vice-Chair), Councillor Juan Cowell, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks*

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

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 1 member of the public.*

25 WELCOME

Audio recording -

The Chair welcomed Members, Officers and public to the Committee meeting.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording –

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steve Jarvis.

27 MINUTES - 4 OCTOBER 2021

Audio Recording –

Councillor Jim McNally, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Michael Weeks seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 4 October 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

28 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording –

There was no other business notified.

29 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording –

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (2) 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.

30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording –

There was no public participation.

31 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording –

The Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled 'Grants and Community Update' and included:

- Updated Members on the outstanding balances for grant funds.
- Advised of possible future grant applications and encouraged Members to advise any groups that may require funding that they can apply for Area Grants by the middle of January 2022.
- Reviewed the events in the town since the last meeting and discussed plans and involvement of upcoming events.

Councillor Michael Muir advised that, should the Coronavirus Support Group apply for grant funding at a future meeting, he would likely be a trustee and would therefore declare an interest at the appropriate time.

The following Members took part in the debate and asked questions:

- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Jim McNally
- Councillor Juan Cowell

The debate and questions included the following points:

- The Baldock Big Lunch was unable to happen this year, but was now scheduled for 5 June 2022 to coincide with the Platinum Jubilee weekend.
- The Baldock Beast was impacted by the weather and the event was forcibly scaled back due to this, but still had around 350 runners attend.
- The Remembrance Day events took place and had around 300 people attend.
- Councillor McNally noted that it was disappointing that no hymns were sung this year due to Covid restrictions. Councillor Muir, as President of the Royal British Legion in Baldock, advised that this was due to a decision taken when cases were still high, but hymns would return for future events.
- The Baldock Christmas Market took place successfully this year. Stallholders were inside, rather than on the High Street as previously, and this had received positive feedback.
- Owing to Covid restrictions still in place the Trips Up The Tower at St Mary's Church were unable to go ahead.
- Social media feedback from the event had been overwhelmingly positive.

Councillor Juan Cowell requested that more emphasis be given to promoting events in the town on social media, as often he only knew of events through updates received as a Councillor.

Councillor Jim McNally wished to express his thanks to the musicians and performers who had performed at the Baldock Christmas Fair free of charge.

Councillor Jim McNally, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Michael Weeks seconded and it was:

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

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.

32 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording –

Members gave updates on issues in their Wards, including:

Councillor Michael Weeks advised that there had been another graffiti attack on the A1 viaduct, which he had removed.

Councillor Michael Muir advised that the County Council Highways Funds for 2021/22 had been allocated, but there was around £30,000 available for schemes in 2022/23. He encouraged Members to contact him with possible suggestions where these outstanding funds could be spent.

Councillor Juan Cowell suggested that the benches by the War Memorial had become unsafe and should be removed. He suggested that sponsorship of new benches could be sought from local businesses.

Councillor Muir advised that there had been a request from the Wilkie family to have a bench on the High Street in honour of Nurse Wilkie who had worked in the town.

Councillor Weeks highlighted that the NHC Free Tree giveaway was happening in Avenue Park on 9 December 2021, 11am to 4pm.

Councillor Tom Tyson advised that there was a contingency plan for any remaining trees after the giveaway.

Councillor Cowell suggested that an area of land be set aside for those who wish to get involved in the project but whose gardens could not fit a tree.

Councillor Tyson agreed and suggested that farmers may be willing to agree to this in some locations.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Chair

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