

CHAIR'S NOTES

BALDOCK AREA FORUM

Meeting held at Baldock Community Centre, Youth Wing, Simpson Drive,
Baldock, SG7 6DH
On Monday 17th July at 7.30pm

NOTES

Present: *Cllr Tom Tyson (TT) (Chair), Cllr Juan Cowell (JC), Cllr Michael Muir (MM), Cllr Michael Weeks (MC), Cllr Steve Jarvis (SJ)*

In Attendance: *Cllr Ian Mantle (IM) (Deputy Exec member for Transport and Planning), Claire Morgan (CM) (Community Partnership Team Leader), Laura Hartley (LH) (Community Partnership Officer), Becca Jenkins (BJ) (Christchurch Baldock), Christine Davis (CD) (Christchurch Baldock), Neil Poole (NP) (Christchurch Baldock)*

Also present: *At the commencement of the meeting there were 7 members of the public (MoP) including registered speakers Paul Mumford (PM (Urban and Civic), Rebecca Britton (RB) (Urban and Civic)*

Meeting Started at **19:30**

CLLR TOM TYSON TO SAY

Welcome to this the first Baldock Area Forum – an opportunity for the local community to be more involved and influence the work of North Herts Council Members and Officers.

As this is not a formal Council Meeting the public are allowed to speak and ask questions but please raise your hand and if possible, say your name when you are invited to speak.

We will be receiving presentations from community groups seeking grant funding. Councillors will be voting to make a recommendation to the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships.

The Community Partnerships officer will clearly state the result of the vote and the Chair will proceed to the next agenda item.

In the event of a tied vote the Chair will have the casting vote.

Are there any questions before we start the meeting?

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

We have received apologies from Cllr Alistair Willoughby and Cllr Amy Allen

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members are reminded to make declarations of interest before an item they may wish to abstain from voting if they have an interest, but they are merely making recommendations and not decisions.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO GRANT APPLICATION (19:33)

CM updated on Members budget - Last civic year total of £4065 was not spent for the Baldock and District budget and has been carried forward onto 23/24 budget. Building on the budget of £5000 from this civic year, the total is now £9065.

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

NP Christchurch Baldock who outlined the background of the charity and what service they provide for the community.

Becca Jenkins presented Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies application

Christine Davies presented Body & Soul application

Becca Jenkins presented Holiday club application

SJ asked how Christchurch promote the Holiday Club.

BJ answered that they communicate and promote through primary schools, The Commit and word of mouth.

Discussion raised about having 3 separate applications for one charity. Concluded that it was clearer to see how the grant will be used and benefit each group that is run by Christchurch Baldock.

SJ queried whether a person with any religious view can attend all the groups or whether they might be preferred to share the views of the church.

Christchurch responded that the groups are open for anyone to attend no matter background or religious views

Holiday Club Vote

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Majority voted in favour of recommending Christchurch application for £700 towards the Holiday club for the purchase of craft resources, catering and hiring of premises.

5 - in favour of recommending

1 - abstained as was not present for the presentation

Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies Vote

Majority voted in favour of recommending Christchurch Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies application for £250 towards the hall hire and refreshments to parents and carers.

5 - in favour of recommending

1 - abstained as was not present for the presentation

Body and Soul Vote

Majority voted in favour of recommending Christchurch Body and Soul application for £375 towards replacing or buying new equipment and to subsidise meals.

5 - in favour of recommending

1 - abstained as was not present for the presentation

4. INFORMATION NOTE: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE (20:05)

Claire Morgan, Community and Partnerships Team Leader, gave presentation on the Community Update. Including introduction of new Community Partnership Officer covering Baldock area.

Discussion on how the Community Partnership Team operate and what they do. The team is there to coordinate and network with community groups and organisations to build partnerships, as well as assess and process grants to reach recommendation and Delegated Decision.

5. PRESENTATIONS (20:16)

Cllr Amy Allen was unable to attend and present on Litter, Waste and the 'Adopt and Area' Scheme. Cllr Tom Tyson presented in her place.

Explained the 'Adopt an Area' scheme, aimed to be an informal scheme where residents can register to pick up litter on a relevant street or area, which won't interfere with the council services. Highlighted that this can be found within the Outlook magazine and on the council website [Adopt an area | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](http://north-herts.gov.uk)

MoP informed that they run a local litter picking group where volunteers will collect

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litter over 1.5 hours once a week. This has been running since 2020.

Another MoP raised if the scheme and people litter picking would be covered by insurance.

TT said he would feedback what cover or insurance would people have under the scheme and how volunteer litter pickers outside of the scheme can come together as one.

CW brought suggestions to encourage waste disposal in the Baldock and surrounding areas:

- Look into if curbside grey bins will take flexible plastic – who will sort the plastic?
- Do separate bins work?
- Labeling bins clearly.
- Making sure bins are within a close proximity to shops/takeaways in town.
- Littering bins scheme – encouragement to use bins by hooking in the public.
- Road sign posters to grab attention and inform. For example, entering Hemel Hempstead there are posters informing the public of the costs of cleaning up waste that is not properly disposed of (could include where the money would have otherwise been spent)
- Coordinate with local groups – NHC, Baldock Beats Waste could help with shared talks in school.
- New street team is working well however the approach to roads such as A505/A507 are not covered. For example, near Weston Woods. When the council are cutting back the trees and bushes, could they simultaneously litter pick so that there is only interruption to the traffic once?
- Green up passageways like Pepper Alley.
- Approaching school and asking for children to present to parents/carers about the impact of littering and waste.
- Wormeries in schools – getting the conversation about recycling and litter with children.
- Gummy bins – bins made from gum specifically for gum.
- Encourage local businesses to provide recyclable or reusable bags rather than carrier bags or to cut handing out any carrier bags.
- Organisations with lots of litter outside should be made to take responsibility.
- Adopting a road had to involve or benefit people in some way for them to want to participate.
- Publicising in WasteAware, NHC newsletter, The Commit

MoP – mentioned that dog waste is noticeable in some areas

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Discussed where another dog bin could be placed, followed by thoughts on who would empty it and if there would be volunteers to aid.

Cllr Ian Mantle, Deputy Exec member for Transport and Planning presenting on the consultation regarding Off Street Car Parking Charges

Explained the proposed 2% inflation on charging tariffs throughout NHC. This would continue to support the economy of town centres by encouraging people to stay longer, increasing the one-hour tariff by 10p, and reducing the gap between one-hour and two-hour tariffs.

5p charges to be reviewed as some machines do not accept 5ps and the replacement of machines, due to commence later in the year.

Open to the forum for discussion.

MM – suggestion to promote the car park behind the Baldock Community Centre by putting in a sign to highlight and promote the car park better.

CM – asked the forum if anyone uses the council car parks?

Three MoP raised their hands and thought that the changes to the tariffs were reasonable

7. OPEN DISCUSSION

U&C update

PM introduced Urban & Civic (U&C) who are planning and delivering the building of the Baldock expansion in partnership with the County Council. They have previously had drop-in meetings in the Heritage Centre in March where members of the public could share initial thoughts and concerns. A similar meeting was also held in Ashwell for those on the outskirts who will be neighbouring the development. Found the main concerns raised were traffic, infrastructure, schools, and open spaces.

RB added U&C have a website where you can contact them and look at information on the development.

[Growing Baldock](#)
[Baldock | Urban&Civic \(urbanandcivic.com\)](#)

At the end of October U&C will hold a further public consultation to present Strategic Master Plan.

U&C returning to Area Form for a brief update in September, then for a longer

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presentation taking place virtually in January.

8. WARD MEMBERS ACTIVITIES (21:00)

MW shared that the Royal British Legion has increased its members to approximately 30/40 members, which enable them to run poppy stands, the parade and run a full committee.

MM advised that he has some funds from their locality budget that they are happy to offer and if anyone knows of anyone in need to contact him.

TT presented Baldock fire update:

- As of 3pm Friday afternoon, Herts Fire & Rescue handed responsibility for the Baldock industrial estate site back to Baldock Industrial Estate Ltd, who are working through Brown & Lee, their managing agents.
- North Herts Council worked closely with Brown & Lee on Friday to ensure they were aware of what needed to be done to secure the site. Brown & Lee have fenced off the buildings that were affected by the fire, ensured there is security on site and have had a road sweeper clear up the contaminated areas of the public parts of the estate.
- North Herts Council, Herts County Council and Brown & Lee met this afternoon (17 July) to agree a programme of works and determine who is responsible for each element. There will be a follow up meeting on Thursday (20 July).
- Brown & Lee have said they are trying to contact all the affected businesses on the estate, through email, mobile numbers, and WhatsApp, so they are kept up to speed on what has been undertaken and ensure businesses that were not affected by the fire are able to gain access to their units.
- Brown & Lee have set up an email address and telephone number for all businesses on the industrial estate, if they need to ask any questions. The email address is bie@brownandlee.com. The phone number is 01462 481811.
- There is currently power onsite but no access to water. Brown & Lee will contact Affinity Water to discuss what needs to happen to reconnect water supplies, and they will update us once the water supply is back on.
- Units that were not affected by the fire can be accessed by business owners, but they must first check with Brown & Lee. Trading from unaffected business units will not be possible until water supplies have been reconnected.
- Herts Building Control and Environmental Health have served enforcement notices just in case Brown & Lee do not meet their obligations. This would allow the relevant statutory authority to step in if required.
- North Herts Council has taken the lead on the recovery, supported by Herts County Council and other organisations. Steve Crowley is the lead officer.

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Herts County Council are currently still leading the business support response, and we are continuing to liaise with them closely.

- North Herts Council have confirmed that all businesses directly affected by the fire will be exempt from paying business rates from the date of the fire. Business owners do not need to contact us to arrange the exemption, it will be applied automatically.
- We are also exploring possible options in terms of temporary accommodation for affected businesses. Further details on this are expected to be announced in the next few days.

9. TOPICS FOR FUTURE FORUMS (21:10)

Suggested topics:

- U&C, Baldock development, to come back for brief update during Septembers Area Forum ahead of January.
- Citizens Advice Bureau – what they do and how they can support/help
- Police speaker to talk and discuss reducing speed limits

Meeting closed 9.12pm