

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE BALDOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE, SIMPSON DRIVE, BALDOCK
ON MONDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2018 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Councillor Michael Muir (Chairman), Councillor Janine Paterson (Vice-Chairman), Steve Jarvis, Jim McNally, Val Shanley and Michael Weeks.*

In Attendance: *Ashley Hawkins (Communities Officer), Ian Gourlay (Committee and Member Services Manager) and Amelia McNally (Committee and Member Services Officer).*

Also Present: *Sergeant Alan Clarke (Hertfordshire Constabulary)
At the commencement of the meeting, 6 members of the public, including public speakers, were present.*

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

46 MINUTES - 4 DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Baldock and District Committee Meeting held on 4 December 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

47 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

48 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Sergeant Alan Clarke from Hertfordshire Constabulary and those making presentations to the committee;
- (2) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front page regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

49 HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Sergeant Alan Clarke (Hertfordshire Constabulary) thanked the Chairman very much for the opportunity to address the Committee. Sergeant Clarke pointed out that across the ten Community Safety Partnerships that make up Hertfordshire, North Herts was the third safest place per crime per thousand of the population in the whole of the county. He stated that Baldock in particular was a very safe area in North Hertfordshire. Sergeant Clarke provided the Committee with a brief overview and breakdown of some of the crime figures in the Baldock and District area as follows:-

Staffing

Baldock Safer Neighbourhood Team, (SNT) consisted of Sergeant Alan Clarke, PC Shaun Deal, PC Katie Golledge and PCSO Sara Masella.

Crime Figures

Overall crime data figures were current and up to date for that Baldock Area Committee meeting. The figures gave comparisons of the period of 1st April 2016 – 4th March 2017 and 1st April 2017 – 4th March 2018. The data showed a slight increase in “All Crime” recorded over those periods, but showed less in Baldock than in the rest of North Hertfordshire. There had, however, been less of an increase in overall crime recorded in the County as a whole. Sergeant Clarke explained that the increase in North Hertfordshire could be attributed to there being much stricter National Crime Recording Standards rules, in that, there were more ways to report crime and active encouragement from the Constabulary for victims of crime to report them.

Burglary

Baldock had bucked the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) and county trend of increases, remaining the same in the number of burglaries to people’s homes. North Herts was placed 2nd in Hertfordshire in terms of safest CSP (Community Safety Partnership) for burglary to dwellings. The number of burglaries carried out to residential non-dwelling that included outbuildings or sheds not considered integral parts of an address, had remained the same, at only seven. Premises not directly linked to a person’s residence that included allotments, community halls and businesses, had shown a decrease of 2 offences during that period.

Motor Vehicle Crime

North Hertfordshire was placed first in terms of safest location for motor vehicle crime in the country. Baldock had seen a small increase in that crime type, but it had been a smaller increase than North Hertfordshire as a whole. Theft from Motor vehicles made up 37 offences carried out in Baldock and keyless entry to Ford Transits was still caused concern.

Domestic Abuse

It was reported that there had been an overall increase in Domestic Abuse recorded throughout the Constabulary. Due to active encouragement from the Police of victims to come forward and report such crime, enabled better safeguarding of those vulnerable which ensured positive action was taken against offenders. The outcome rate (crimes solved) in North Herts was the second highest in the county.

Violence Against a Person (Victim Based)

The increase in offences recorded in Baldock mirrored that across the county. However, the outcome rate in Baldock was higher than that in both North Herts and the county.

Criminal Damage

Baldock had seen a 21% decrease in criminal damage caused during that period. Again, that figure had bucked the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) and county trend, both of which had seen an increase in offences.

Theft from Shops

Baldock had seen a massive 65% decrease in offences. Once more that was in contrast to the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) and the county. Of the offences recorded, 52.6% had been solved, which was an impressive number and partly attributed to the close working relationship the local officers had forged with Tesco and other outlets to ensure early reporting and evidence captured.

Neighbourhood Watch

Sergeant Clarke reported that Neighbourhood Watch membership had continued to grow, thanks to the excellent work carried out by Mr John Hammond. He stated that there was a very pleasing approximate 1,000 membership for the town of Baldock.

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Sergeant Clarke went on to answer and make comment on a few questions as follows:-

A member made comment on the issue of van break in's and the theft of work tools, asking how that may be prevented. Sergeant Clarke confirmed that it was a tricky offence to deal with, but confirmed that the Police were always thinking of ways to help cease that particular criminality. He informed the Committee there was financial constraints on their own buying power, however, there were several types of "after market locks" that could be fitted to vehicles. He pointed out, however, that superior locks and devices were unfortunately extremely expensive and not everyone wanted to fit what were rather large, unsightly steel devices. Sergeant Clarke informed the Committee that in several previous cases, victims of such a crime had been given by the Police, shed alarms that victims of such a crime could fit onto their vehicle. Sergeant Clarke further informed the Committee that the Police also ran tool marking events which helped aid the chance of tool recovery.

In answer to a member's question, Sergeant Clarke confirmed that in more rural areas, the type of crimes committed were mainly theft of plants, criminal damage to crops and "hare-coursing".

The Chairman reported on behalf of a member of public present, that there was an issue of illegal parking on both Sun Street and Church Street, particularly from large vans and lorries. She had informed that she resided where both roads met and had been witness to a continual blocking of those roads due to unlawful parking on double yellow lines, thus prohibiting emergency access and was deeply concerned. Sergeant Clarke informed those present that it was paramount to report that type of crime as it happened in order that action could be taken by the Police.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Clarke very much for his presence, and very informative presentation. Sergeant Clarke was also thanked for all of the work he and his team had undertaken for the Baldock and District area.

50 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - BALDOCK COMMUNITY FORUM CIC

Prior to the item being discussed, Councillor Jim McNally declared a declarable interest. He explained that he was the director of Baldock Community Forum CIC. He advised that he would move to the public area of the meeting room, answer any questions and then leave before the debate and vote on the item, (as per paragraph 7.3 of the current Code of Conduct)

At this point Councillor McNally moved to the public area of the meeting room.

It was explained to the Baldock Area Committee by the Communities Officer that Baldock Events Forum was set up in May 2017 to continue the events previously carried out by the Baldock Town Partnership. The Baldock Area Committee was advised that Baldock Community Forum CIC was seeking financial support to assist with the purchase of some essential equipment to enable them to carry out their annual calendar of events. Some of the equipment required included 4 gazebos, 25 barrier fences and high visibility vests. The Communities Officer pointed out the equipment the group wished to purchase would not only help with the events carried out by Baldock and District areas, but would also aid other events within the whole of North Herts District.

The Communities Officer reported that Baldock Community Forum CIC was requesting £1,500 against an overall project cost of £2,000.

The Communities Officer who reported on the Baldock Community Forum was thanked by the Chairman.

51 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - WALLINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Mr Paul Morris thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding the grant funding application for Wallington Village Hall.

Mr Morris explained that the outside play area of Wallington Village Hall required renewal of the protective surface. He commented that the play area was extremely well used by the children in the village. He further confirmed that the bark chippings used as protective surfacing had not been replaced since 2011, and on health and safety grounds, it had been recommended by ROSPA for that surface to be replaced.

The total cost of the project was £600, for which an application had been made for grant funding of £500.

The Chairman thanked Mr Morris for his application.

52 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - WESTON CRICKET CLUB

Mr William Pugh thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding the grant funding application for Weston Cricket Club.

Mr Pugh explained to the Committee that Weston Cricket Club was seeking funding support to assist with the purchase of a lawn mower to allow for enhanced maintenance of their cricket pitch. He stated that currently they were paying £1,500 annually to a grass cutting contractor for their services. He further stated that the Cricket Club was in a position to contribute £1,500 toward the potential £3,000 cost to purchase a second hand mower and Weston Cricket Club themselves would take on the responsibility of maintenance.

Mr Pugh informed the Committee that Weston Cricket Club hosted between 40 and 50 matches a year. He stated their club consisted of three youth teams and other players, of all age ranges, came from both Weston and the surrounding villages. Mr Pugh pointed out that owning a mower would fulfil the essential requirement to cut the grass more regularly during the cricket season.

The total cost of the grant funding application was estimated at £3,000, of which Weston Cricket Club was seeking £1,500.

The Chairman thanked Mr Pugh for his presentation.

53 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - SANDON STROLLERS CRICKET CLUB

Mr David Green thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding the grant funding application for Sandon Strollers Cricket Club.

Mr Green explained to the Committee that the Cricket Club was looking to improve and enhance their facilities. They were requesting funding support to assist with the purchase of a new bowling machine, a lawn mower for the cricket table and they also wished to connect a much needed water supply to the cricket table.

Sandon Strollers Cricket Club was requesting £500, against an overall project cost of £1,050.

The Chairman thanked Mr Green for his presentation.

54 BALDOCK COMMUNITY EVENTS

Councillor Jim McNally updated the Committee on the recently held Baldock Beast Half Marathon. He confirmed there had been approximately 500 entries that year, with a turnout of an estimated 400, making it the largest Baldock Beast Half Marathon. Councillor McNally

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stated that the event had been a huge success reporting too that the weather had been kind to the runners. He informed the Committee that there had been really positive feedback on both how the event had gone but also how well the event had been organised.

Councillor McNally thanked all of those who had been involved in that event. The Committee formally acknowledged the input of the Communities Officer in to Baldock Beast Marathon and thanked him for his time and effort in helping to make success of that event.

55 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Communities Officer introduced the report of the Communities Manager in respect of Grants and Community Update.

The Communities Officer drew attention to the updated budget funding remaining for the Committee to allocate in the 2017/18, set out in Paragraph 7.3 of the report. He corrected a mistake made in the figure of 2017/18 Base Budget which, in the report, should have read £1,207, not £1,477.

The Communities Officer explained, as per paragraph 8.1.5 of the report, he was assisting Baldock Scouts with the organisation of their St George's Day Parade due to take place in Baldock on 22 April 2018.

The Communities Officer reported that Sports Therapy 4 U were putting plans in place for a 5Km run which would be held in Baldock that September as part of their 10 year anniversary celebrations. The Communities Officer confirmed he had, himself, run the course, enabling the provision of course route advice. He stated that the organisers were working closing with Highways and Police regarding potential road closures to ensure smooth running of the event, allowing for little road disruption.

RESOLVED: That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston and District be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Baldock and District area.

56 GRANT APPLICATION - BALDOCK COMMUNITY FORUM CIC

Prior to the item being discussed, Councillor Jim McNally had declared a declarable interest and at that point he left the room.

Noting the grant application for £1,500 against an overall project cost of £2,000, the Committee was minded to grant fund the full cost of the project of £2,000.

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £2,000, (split £1,520 from Baldock Town and £480 from Baldock East) be awarded to Baldock Community Forum CIC, to assist with the purchase of essential equipment to enable them to carry out their annual calendar of events.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

57 GRANT APPLICATION - WALLINGTON VILLAGE HALL

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Wallington Village Hall, (split £445 from Weston and Sandon, and £55 from Baldock Town) to assist with the purchase of additional bark chippings for the play area at Wallington Village Hall.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

58 GRANT APPLICATION - WESTON CRICKET CLUB

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,500 be awarded to Weston Cricket Club, (split £1,000 from Weston and Sandon, £300 from Baldock Town, £90 from Baldock East and £110 from Arbury to assist with the purchase of a lawn mower to allow for the better maintenance of the pitch at Weston Cricket Club.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

59 GRANT APPLICATION - SANDON STROLLERS CRICKET CLUB

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Sandon Strollers Cricket Club, (split £433 from Weston and Sandon, and £67 from Baldock Town) to assist with the purchase of a new bowling machine, a lawn mower for the cricket table and also to connect a water supply to the cricket table.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

60 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

The Chairman informed the Committee that road re-surfacing to the South end of Baldock High Street was the only outstanding item remaining in 2017/18 fund allocation. He confirmed that the re-surfacing would be carried out before the close of that financial year.

The Chairman reported he had allocated £60,000, being two thirds of the county council budget. He added that the remainder of the money would be allocated upon receiving confirmation of the cost of a Zebra Crossing in South Road near Monkhill Lane. The Chairman further reported there had been approximately 12 roads within Clothall Common that would be micro surfaced, (a thin layer of tar that sealed and would protect road against bad weather). He stated that the process gave a further life span of between 5 to 10 years before repairs would once again be required.

It was agreed by the Committee that any remainder of unallocated funds be used for town centre enhancements.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm

Chairman