

North Herts Council
BALDOCK & SURROUNDING VILLAGES COMMUNITY FORUM

**Meeting held at Baldock Library, Simpson Dr, Baldock SG7 6DH – Monday,
9th September at 7:30pm**

NOTES

Present:

*Councillor Alistair Willoughby, Councillor Rhona Cameron,
Councillor Tom Tyson, Councillor Stewart Willoughby, Cllr Steve
Jarvis, Councillor Michael Muir.*

In Attendance:

Claire Morgan (Community and Partnerships Team Leader)

Also present:

*At the commencement of the meeting there was 1 member of the
public, 5 registered speakers.*

Meeting Started at **7:30pm**

1. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Alistair Willoughby welcomed everyone in attendance.

- Highlighted that it's an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.
- Informed everyone in attendance that we would be receiving presentations from *Angels Support Group, Groundwork East* and *Creative Chefs CIC* who are seeking grant funding.
- Members were reminded they are making recommendations and not decisions for grant applications.
- Members were 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.

Apologies for absence: *Councillor Emma Rowe*

2. Public Participation – Presentations from Baldock Events Forum and Baldock Beats Waste.

2.1 **Baldock Events Forum (BEF)** – Tara Geere, Kate Matthews, and Stewart Matthews

Tara, Stewart, and Katie introduced themselves as the new directors of BEF.

They run Baldock Festival, Beer Festival they will liaise with other event organisers in the town to provide support and advice.

Future events – Baldock Beast, Street Fair in May, Big Lunch in June and Christmas Fair in Dec. They are planning four Eat Feast events for 2025 (like the street food heroes) and manage the Wednesday charter market.

The Beer Festival will run the high street bar for Balstock.

They will be seeking funding for grass matting along the high street for the market to support the green areas (that the grass can grow through).

Christmas fair is planned for 6/7 December.

Cllr Muir offered the help of the Baldock Rotary.

They work closely with Rotary helped with funding Christmas lights and purchase of new panels.

2.2 **Baldock Beats Waste** – Christine Watson baldockbeatswaste@gmail.com

They formed 6 to 8 years ago, and they wanted to make people aware of environmental issues and littering.

They consist of a small core group and many members who help with activities when required.

Pre Covid, they had busy meetings in pubs, or community venues such as Baldock Town Hall.

They concentrate on encouraging people to buy less and reuse more.

The meetings have stopped, and people don't seem so keen to come out and meet.

They had the Ecofair this Saturday 7th September. There were 22 stalls in the high street. It was a nice community feeling and all the organisations who has stalls were talking to each other.

They don't charge for stalls – they make a little bit of money from the tombola.

They advertised in local press and on social media, but there were some comments from the public that it was not well advertised.

They do occasional litter picks as a group. There are quite a few local people who litter pick on their own, in their immediate local area.

They used to visit local cafes and advise them on being plastic free.

They need more members, if anyone is interested, they can contact Christine for membership form.

Cllr Jarvis asked why they've stopped supporting local cafes – Christine said she needs more volunteers to help including social media.

Knights templar have the Green Knights – Environmental group.

Cllr Tom Tyson congratulated Christine on wonderful event.

3. Grants

Claire Morgan the Community and Partnership Team Leader, updated Members on community grant budgets.

On the Community Forum Report, as outlined in paragraph 3.1 and detailed in Appendix 1, the remaining Community Grant budget available is £8,029.

The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is £6,135.

If the applications outlined in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 are recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, there would be £1,894 available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 24-25 financial year.

4. Public Presentation - Grants

Presentations then took place.

4.1 Angels Support Group – Bethan Desai.

Angels Support Group asked for **£1,828**. They are applying for funding to part-fund their one-to-one service supporting families for a year providing direct, individualised support via phone calls, emails, zoom meetings and support at meetings with professionals. The method of delivery is determined by the needs of the parents/carers, and it can involve Angels staff attending in-person meetings at schools or with other professionals. The service involves 5 members of staff with specialist training providing weekly support to parents/carers.

Cllr Alistair Willoughby opened the floor to questions.

Cllr Tom Tyson: What happens in the 1 to 1 session? Is this a one-off session or ongoing. Bethan – answered that it depends on the needs of the families. Sometimes it's one off, if it's a simple issue but it might be more complex and require ongoing support. They sometimes meet families in Pixies café. They work with local pubs who have fundraising quizzes.

Cllr Rhona Cameron – asked if they work with other support groups and agencies. Answer: Yes, they do, but they offer this as a one-to-one situation. They also advise parents and carers on their legal rights.

Cllr Muir – offered to support individual Baldock cases as the HCC Member.

Cllr Jarvis – also offered to support cases in his area as HCC Member. Hoped that the NHS and integrated care structure might eventually help the situation.

Full amount to be paid proposed by Councillor Michael Muir and seconded by Councillor Stewart Willoughby.

Unanimous vote in favour of providing £1,828.to Angels Support Group

Cllr Alistair Willoughby thanked Bethan for the presentation.

4.2 Groundwork East - Rachel Rice presented.

Rachel from **Groundwork East** explained the details of the project and requested **£2,367**.

They are applying for funding for their Grow It, Cook It, Share It course at Holly Blue Family Centre. It is delivered in person, over 6 weeks, with 2-hour sessions each week. It teaches families how to grow their own fruit and vegetables through supervised gardening and how to prepare healthy meals through simple cooking sessions.

Cllr S Willoughby – asked how families are recruited – Answer: through the family centre mainly – but it's open generally, so anyone can attend.

Cllr Jarvis – are you working with the Family Centre or just hiring the space.

Answer – it's a bit of both.

Cllr Muir informed Rachel that there are 5 raised beds at Baldock Allotments. Speak to Mick Camp.

Cllr Tom Tyson – how targeted are the courses?

Its families working together – parents and children get equal focus.

Full amount to be paid proposed by Councillor Michael Muir and seconded by Councillor Rhona Cameron.

Unanimous vote in favour of providing **£2,367** to **Groundwork East**

Cllr Alistair Willoughby thanked Rachel for the presentation.

Tara Geere from BEF mentioned that the Baldock Beer Festival have a hardship fund and Groundwork may be able to apply for funds towards projects to support disadvantaged families.

Cllr Alistair Willoughby has details of how to apply.

Cllr Steve Jarvis had to leave the meeting.

4.3 Creative Chefs CIC – Angie Marshall presented.

Creative Chefs CIC asked for **£1,912**. (In the grant report outlined in Appendix 3 the amount requested showed as £1,940 but this was an error)

Angie outlined the details of the application in her presentation and gave out examples of the recipe book each family is to receive.

There were no further questions.

Full amount to be paid proposed by Councillor Alistair Willoughby and seconded by Councillor Stewart Willoughby.

Unanimous vote in favour of providing £1,912 to Creative Chefs CIC.

Cllr Alistair Willoughby thanked Angie for the presentation.

5. Grants & Community Update

Claire Morgan, Community and Partnerships Team Leader, gave a presentation on the Community Update. Most of which can be seen in the report. These included:

Districtwide Community Updates

- Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group.
- Due to the huge success of last year's Youth Showcase event, we are again working with Hitchin Rotary Club to help deliver a second Youth Showcase event in Hitchin.
- Letchworth has achieved 'Bee Friendly' status with the work done by our contractors John O'Conner's. The bee corridor can now be extended into other towns.
- The Community Partnerships Team Leader has been working with the Save Club 85 Steering Group to continue the operations of Club 85, a live music venue on Whinbush Road in Hitchin. The building's owner needs to sell, and the group has explored renting or purchasing a new location. However, purchasing the current building is the most practical option. After negotiations, the owner has agreed to sell to Club 85 if they can raise the funds. The group plans to set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) with shareholders to enable community ownership of the building. They have started an initial fund to cover professional legal advice for setting up a not-for-profit company with robust governance which will facilitate the application to large-scale funding pots.
- The team have a budget of £210,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to use for applications for grant funding of between £5,000 and £20,000. The deadline for applications was midnight on 1st September. Successful applicants should receive funding by the end of October, to be spent by end of March 2025.
- Working with SAG and town centre managers preparing for the Farmer's Christmas Lights Tractor Tour 2024.
- Working with the Royal British Legion and Letchworth BID to deliver the Letchworth Remembrance Day parade 2024.

Area Community Updates

- Discussions around Baldock Community Centre as the lease of centre has reached its contractual expiry date.
- Promoting the Healthy Hub teams activities taking place in Baldock.

- Working with Growing Baldock/ Urban & Civic towards setting up a new Strategy Group.
- Potentially forming a new NHDC Baldock Network Group.
- Working with the Living Theatre company to see if they can deliver workshops to Baldock schools.
- Supporting the Baldock Beats Waste event.
- Ward walks with new Local Councillors to be arranged.
- Danny Pearson has now left North Herts Council a replacement is being recruited and the vacancy is currently being advertised.

Cllr Alistair Willoughby thanked the Officer for the presentation.

6. Ward members activities

Cllr Michael Muir mentioned that the Baldock Rotary also have a grant budget but do not get many applications contact John Wright (community) at the Rotary for details. [Contact - Rotary Club of Baldock \(rotary-ribi.org\)](http://rotary-ribi.org)

7. Topics for future Baldock & Surrounding Villages Community Forum

CHAIR asked for suggestions for future topics for discussion and possible future venues in Baldock. The next Community Forum is planned for December 2nd and March 3rd at Baldock Community Centre.

December will be the theme of ideas for Baldock Festival Events for 2025
March will be Police and Community Safety

Cllr Alistair Willoughby thanked everyone for coming and called the meeting to a close.

Meeting closed 9:05pm