

**North Herts Council
BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMUNITY FORUM**

**Meeting held at Baldock Community Centre
On Monday 2 December 2024 at 7.30pm**

NOTES

Present: Cllr Alistair Willoughby (Chair) (AW), Cllr Emma Rowe (Vice Chair) (ER), Cllr Rhona Cameron (RC), Cllr Steve Jarvis (SJ), Cllr Michale Muir (MM), Cllr Tom Tyson (TT) and Cllr Stewart Willoughby (SW).

In attendance:
Claire Morgan (Community and Partnerships Team Leader) (CM),
Louise Symes (LS) (Strategic Planning & Projects Manager)

Also present:
At the commencement of the meeting there were around 9 members of the public (MOP), including registered speakers.

Meeting Started at **19:30**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr A Willoughby welcomed everyone in attendance.

Highlighted that the Forum is an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.

3. PRESENTATION – URBAN & CIVIC

Paul Mumford from Urban & Civic presented and update on the Growing Baldock development?

- 3300 new homes to be built in Baldock along with all the infrastructure needed for the population. Website called Growing Baldock they have talked to the communities in the surrounding villages Ashwell, Bygrave. They are talking to HCC about how to approach secondary school provision. Does Baldock need a new school or expand KTS or have one big school? Also, GP provision would need to be looked at as the current surgery can't expand.
- They are working on a strategic master plan they'll come back to NHC with a plan next year and then consult further before submitting a planning application.

- The build is expected to start in 2026 the whole project is expected to take 10 years.
- Contact U&C for further information via their website or through your local Councillor.
- Q- Cllr Muir how much affordable housing – we have policy of 40%.
- A- Paul Mumford - we will stick to the policy but not go over it.
- Q- Cllr Jarvis – what is the time scale?
- A – Master Plan to be delivered early next year.
- Q- Cllr Muir – Improvements to the station which needs lifts.
- A- Yes we'll look at this and opening up access from the North.
- Q- Cllr Tyson -Will there be one planning application.
- A- No probably about three planning applications but not finally agreed.
- Q- Cllr Emma Rowe – Why is Canberry Farm site to be first?
- A- Just for practical reasons some of the infrastructure is in place already.
- Q – Cllr Muir has spoken to the residents of the mobile homes adjacent to the Canberry Farm site. They are worried about being overlooked and would prefer that nearby new builds to be bungalows or two story.
- A- cannot commit to the designs yet but residents can comment on any planning applications.
- Q- from floor – Kathryn Stacey – the roads are congested already what is happening about the road's infrastructure?
- A- There will be a new bridge over the railway for the new residential areas to get into town. But want to encourage people to walk or cycle from home into town centre.
- Q- Cllr Rowe – There were issues with traffic as there was an accident on the A1 making driving into town difficult – will the developments make the traffic worse?
- Question - from floor can you make Baldock safer for Cycling.
- A – yes will try to, narrowing roads for cars and making pavements wider for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Q – Cllr A Willoughby – Trains has U&C spoken to the train providers about how the provision for trains will be improved or increased for the growing population of the town.
- Q – Kathryn Stacey– what community spaces will be included in the plan.
- A – Once they have worked out transport. Roads, health and education they'll look at community spaces. Perhaps a community hall or put funding into spaces in the town centre. But have not really had conversations about community spaces.
- Q- from the floor about the left turn into Whitehorse Street,
- A- yes U&C are looking at this issue – its about trying to get traffic away from the town. Want to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and bridleways.
- Cllr Muir – Need to talk to National Highways about a better way onto the A1 from Letchworth Gate to avoid people coming through Baldock.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO GRANT APPLICATION

The Community Partnerships officer informed those present that there is £1,922 available in the Baldock & District grant budget. If all grants are recommended and subsequently approved, there will be £365 remaining in the budget for the remainder of the financial year.

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

Christine Davies presented the Christchurch Body & Soul application.

Body & Soul vote

Cllr Emma Rowe proposed.

Cllr Rhona Cameron seconded.

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending Christchurch Body & Soul application for £1,560 towards the cost of their instructor.

5. PRESENTATION – BALDOCK FESTIVAL

Kathryn Stacey, Baldock Festival representative, presented on Baldock Festival Communities.

- Challenges and opportunities – what events would the community like to see. Kathrine asked the floor if anyone can help, need more volunteers.
- Concerned that they only cater to one demographic, and they would like more diversity.
- Cllr Cameron get competition with schools to design a poster for the festival.
- Its hard to get young people as they're in SATs and A levels.
- From floor what about targeting yr 9s and DoE.
- Cllr Muir – what about Maypole dancing.
- Kathryn – we need to get a Maypole but not sure where to get one.

Challenges – Hall Hire and PLI – Insurance costs £1k they're finding everything expensive. Can the council provide any in kind support – CM will investigate meeting with Kathryn.

6. PRESENTATION – PARKING TARIFF CONSULATION

Louise Symes presented on the proposed parking tariff increases for 25/26.

- [Off street parking tariffs | North Herts Council](#)

8. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Jane Porter from Citizens Advice introduced herself as the Rural Outreach Volunteer. Jane explained the Citizens Advice holds a weekly drop-in session in Baldock Library Wednesday mornings between 10:30 and 12 noon where they will

sign post people to relevant organisations of for appointments with a trained advisor at their Letchworth office.

Jane mentioned that they need more volunteers and Kathryn Stacey suggested that they might like to have a stall at the Baldock Fair to promote their work and recruit volunteers.

Cllr S Willoughby there were police checking speeding by Tapps Garden Centre.

9. COMMUNITY UPDATE

Claire Morgan, Community and Partnerships Team Leader, presented the Community Update.

10. TOPICS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

- March – Police update TBC & Everyone Active TBC
- Cllr S Willoughby – can we encourage more local groups to attend this group to network with each other.
Venue: Baldock Community Centre

MEETING CLOSED 21:15