

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

**Meeting held at Baldock Library, Simson Drive, Baldock, SG7 6DH
On Monday 8 December 2025 at 7.30pm**

NOTES

Present: Cllr A Willoughby (Chair) (AW), Cllr Rowe (Vice Chair) (ER), Cllr Jarvis (SJ), Cllr S Willoughby (SW), Cllr Tyson (TT), Cllr Muir (MM), Cllr Cameron (RC)

In attendance:

Officer Shannon Natt (SN) – Enterprise Business Partner
Officer Louise Symes (LS) – Strategic Planning & Projects Manager
Officer Tracy Westgate (TW) – Community & Partnerships Officer

Also present:

At the commencement of the meeting there were around 15 members of the public (MoP), including 3 registered speakers.

Meeting Started at 19:30

Housekeeping notes were read by AW

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Richard Meredith-Hardy - **RevIvel**

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr A Willoughby welcomed everyone in attendance.

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

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.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO GRANT APPLICATION

The Community Partnerships officer informed those present that there is £5,967 available in the Baldock & Villages grant budget. If all grants are recommended and subsequently approved, there will be £3,467 left in the budget for the remainder of the 2025/26 financial year.

Presentations received in support of grant applications by the following:

Gary Sutcliffe (GS) presented the **Resolve** application.

Members enquired and received satisfactory answers to:

- Would the funds be used to benefit the residents of North Hertfordshire?

Resolve vote

AW proposed.

MM seconded.

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending the Resolve application for £1,000 towards the cost of a key worker who will work with residents of Baldock & The Villages.

MM declared an interest in the next item and left the room.

Gordon Brooks presented the **Rotary Club of Baldock** application.

No questions were raised.

Rotary Club of Baldock vote

AW proposed.

SW seconded

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending the Rotary Club of Baldock's application for £1,500 towards the costs of purchasing new and improved Christmas Lights for Baldock town center.

MM returned to the room.

4. PRESENTATION – REVIVEL

Nick Rodgers

Nick Rodgers is the Honorary President of Revlvel and kindly offered to do an outline of Revlvel's work in replacement for Richard's presentation.

Revlvel is the river conservation group set up to protect the River Ivel and Ivel Springs. He explained how the current level of extraction from the bore holes is causing issues with the Ivel and confirmed when the flow is too low, Affinity adds 1 mega litre of water per day. He provided updates on some of the work that has already taken place and some of the work that is currently being undertaken, including the partnership working with Xylem that is taking place on Richard Meredith-Hardy's property at Radwell Mill.

Topics covered in the Q&A:

- To what extent does augmentation affect the water quality? Revlvel rely on Affinity to monitor this.
- The rainfall last Winter was sufficient to replenish the aquifer; however the dry spring and summer have depleted it again.

- It was noted that when the aquifer was full the flow was as expected.
- Has the restoration work at the springs been successful? It was noted that because of the amount of upheaval it will be approx. 5 years for the ecosystem to stabilize.
- A good job was completed, lining the channels with flint.
- What extent of augmentation is required? At present, 1 mega litre per day.
- What areas of land is needed to fill the aquifer? All the rain from Weston Hills and the Melbourn Rock outcrop flow into the aquifer. It receives water from a very large area.

Information about Revlvel and their work can be found here:

- [The Revlvel Association – Working together to save the upper River Ivel](#)

5. PRESENTATION – NH COMMUNITY LOTTERY

Shannon Natt, North Herts Council Officer

- North Herts Community Lottery was launched in 2022 creating sustainable income streams for charities locally.
- 66 causes have signed up so far.
- Over £95K has been raised.
- From each £1 ticket, 50p goes to your chosen charity, 10p goes to other good causes, 20p goes towards prizes and the remainder covers the administration and VAT.

Topics covered in the Q&A:

- Can new groups still sign up? Yes. There are ready-made marketing materials to help new groups.
- We are a not-for-profit group, not a registered charity, are we able to sign up? Yes!

You can find out more about the North Herts Community Lottery here:

[North Herts Community Lottery: Easy online fundraising for good causes - North Herts Community Lottery](#)

6. PRESENTATION – DRAFT TOWN CENTRES STRATEGY

Louise Symes, North Herts Council Officer

The Draft Town Centres Strategy is out for consultation until the end of January. It is looking at how to encourage people into the town centres, to provide guidance for developers and landowners, the potential use of vacant properties, how to support existing business owners, the town's heritage, the infrastructure and all other elements that add together to provide a strong and robust town centre plan. It is looking at the unique strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of each town. Please go online and add your comments, a link to the survey is below. The results of the survey will be presented to Cabinet in April.

NB There was a certain amount of cross-over between questions aimed at the Draft Town Centre Strategy and the Growing Baldock planning application.

Topics covered in the Q&A:

- Have the Council spoken to the experts about the local area(s)?
- A concern was raised that the information provided by locals would not be acted upon, despite the consultation.
- Could the Council press for the roundabout on North Road to be completed as an early part of the Growing Baldock project to ease traffic flow?
- Does the consultation consider the views of the people who use Baldock town centre but live in the surrounding villages?
- There were similar concerns about the Clothall Common development, but Clothall Common had been an attribute to the community.
- Concern was expressed about the links between the Villages and Baldock being severed during the development, and once people start using other towns as their main town centre, they may not return to using Baldock once the development is complete.
- It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny had picked up on the need for the strategy to be publicised to the Villages and for the strategy to refer to the Villages. Confirmation was received it has been sent to all the Parish Councils.
- Would the work continue under the new Unitary when the LGR takes place. Yes, it is believed that this will be continued with by whatever administration is in place.

Here is a link to the North Herts Town Centres Strategy page, which includes a link to the consultation:

[Town centres strategy | North Herts Council](#)

7. INFORMATION NOTE ON THE PROPOSED PARKING TARIFF INCREASES 2026/27

AW asked **LS** to provide an overview of the changes.

- The increases will be 2% rounded to the nearest 10pence.
- There are no proposed changes to the tariff at The Twitchell for 2026/27.

8. PRESENTATION – GROWING BALDOCK

Paul Mumford, from Urban & Civic, presented an update on Growing Baldock.

The current position with the Growing Baldock plans were covered, please see the slide presentation (Appendix A) for details. The consultation ends on Wednesday 10th December.

Topics covered in the Q&A:

- Concerns were expressed regarding the routes construction traffic would use. For the development North of the railway line, the traffic will come in via a A1/Services roundabout. For the southern site construction traffic would need to come through the town and it may be via South Road which

- the MoP considered to be unsuitable for the purpose. PM commented that if planning permission is given, there will be restrictions on the construction traffic needing to use South Road such as having controlled delivery hours to avoid rush hour traffic.
- There was a query about building the new access bridge over the railway as an earlier part of the whole development. PM noted it is currently expected once approx. 800 homes have been built.
 - It was asked if opening the closed access points on Clothall Common might relieve some of the traffic pressure. This will be fed back to the highways authority.
 - There were concerns expressed about interconnectivity between the villages particularly Bygrave and Ashwell and Baldock station. The MoP felt more people would start using Ashwell & Morden station and taking their discretionary spending away from Baldock.
 - There were concerns expressed about safety of additional commuters who might choose to use Ashwell and Morden Station as the parking is already inadequate and some of the parking on the roadsides is unsafe.
 - There was a request for clarity around how vehicle access from the villages will remain connected to Baldock over the 15 years of the development.
 - It was noted that some journeys would be more difficult but there would never be a point when the villages would be cut off.
 - There are no plans to expand the car park at Baldock Station.
 - PM noted Urban & Civic are looking into a bus service for the town and would see if it would work to include Bygrave and Ashwell, potentially funded by the developer for the first few years until it becomes financially viable.
 - There have been approx. 70 responses to the Planning application so far, of which half have mentioned transport. The next most commented upon themes are education and health.
 - Installing a Park and Ride scheme was spoken about. It would not be viable initially, but perhaps in the future.
 - The lack of new sports facilities was queried. PM noted that with the secondary school provision, whatever it may look like, any new sports facilities built would be made with the intention of the facilities being used by the public out of school hours. So, within the planning process, consideration would be made for separate access.
 - SJ noted the challenge is to encourage people to walk *if they can*, allowing the limited parking to be available for those who need to drive.
 - The planning system would need to show the direct impact that Growing Baldock will have on Ashwell and Morden for any action to be taken at Ashwell & Morden station.
 - A MoP queried where the water for the newbuilds would come from. A full explanation was provided as per the presentation at the September Community Forum.
 - The first phase (around 250 homes) would not require additional capacity in the waste water system. MoP noted this was not what had been said when there was a similar planning application 6 years ago.

9. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- None were raised by the Members.
- A query was raised regarding illegal parking in permit areas, by a set of garages, where, when questioned, the traffic enforcement officer said he was unable to do anything. AW will take this forward as he believes the traffic enforcement officer can issue tickets in this area as permits are required for the garages.
- MoP queried the illumination limitations that should be in place for Baldock Services, believed to be 3 lumens. TT & MM will take this forward and investigate.

10. COMMUNITY UPDATE

TW, Community Partnerships Officer, read the Community update as contained in Appendix 4.

11. TOPICS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

RC suggested the Ramblers Association.

NR recommended we still have the presentation from Richard Meredith-Hardy

MoP Events Management and Planning (MoP was referred to Baldock Events Forum)

AW Thanked everyone for attending.

MEETING CLOSED

21.35