

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE BALDOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE, SIMPSON DRIVE, BALDOCK
ON MONDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2019 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Michael Weeks (Vice-Chairman), Steve Jarvis, Jim McNally, Michael Muir and Tom Tyson*

In Attendance: *Simon Ellis (Development and Conservation Manager), Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager), Julie Williams (Electoral Service Manager), Ashley Hawkins (Community Engagement Officer) and Amelia McNally (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – Start of Item - 41 Seconds

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor Valentine Shanley.

15 MINUTES - 24 JUNE 2019

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 51 Seconds

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 24 June 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

16 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 1 Minute 27 Seconds

The Chairman advised there was an additional item to be received that evening under public participation – Revlvel Association.

17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 1 Minute 50 Seconds

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chairman advised of the running order of that evenings proceedings;
- (3) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded; and
- (4) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages 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.

18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - REVIVAL OF THE UPPER IVEL

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 3 Minutes 12 Seconds

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Mr Richard Meredith Hardy, from Radwell Mill (RevIvel Association), thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding Reviving the Upper Ivel For Future Generations and drew the attention to the following:

- The River Ivel had traditionally been a Trout Stream.
- The River Ivel had been dry for the last 27 out of 50 months.
- Ivel Springs was a National Nature Reserve.
- Radwell Lake was now approximately 18 inches below its normal level.
- The lack of water was entirely caused by the abstraction that Affinity Water made, which had been authorised by the Environment Agency.
- An Association, namely The RevIvel had now been established in order to persuade the government organisations to cap abstraction from the Baldock bore-holes to revive the River Ivel. The inaugural meeting of the association would take place on 21 October 2019 at Radwell Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm.
- Requested that North Herts District Council supported and assisted with applying pressure to reduce pumping in order to re-establish the River Ivel.

The Chairman thanked Mr Meredith for his presentation and it was

RESOLVED: That both Affinity Water and the Environmental Agency would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Baldock and District Committee to give a presentation on Ivel Springs.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To provide strategy and future plans for the River Ivel.

19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - BALDOCK ROTARY CLUB

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 8 Minutes 21 Seconds

Councillor Jim McNally declared a declarable interest. He informed the Committee that within his capacity as the Chairman of the Baldock Events Forum that he was involved with the Baldock Rotary Club with respect to the Christmas Tree and Christmas Lights for Baldock. He stated that whilst he was involved, he did not feel that this would disable him from taking part in an impartial decision in respect to that grant application and remained in the room for the presentation, discussion and vote.

Councillor Michael Muir declared a declarable interest. He informed the Committee that he was a member of Baldock Rotary Club, however, he too felt that he was able to make an impartial decision in respect to the grant application and remained in the room for the presentation, discussion and vote.

Mr Rob Hemmings, Baldock Rotary Club thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their grant application and drew attention to the following:

- Baldock Rotary Club had purchased and erected Christmas lights from 1978;
- Invested heavily in new frames in 2009 with a cost of £2,525;
- Last year, 2018, with assistance from the Festival Committee the increased cost was £10,940;
- Baldock Rotary Club had invested a lot of money over years into Christmas lights;
- Their Budget had been greatly reduced, however costs had risen; and
- More legislation had been imposed over the last 2 years which had incurred yet more cost.

Councillor Michael Weeks and Jim McNally contributed to the discussion in respect of the application for grant funding.

The Chairman thanked Baldock Rotary Club on behalf of the Committee and Baldock, stating that a huge debt of gratitude was owed for all of their efforts and hard work in purchasing and erecting Christmas lights in the town year after year.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hemmings for his presentation.

20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - BALDOCK BEATS WASTE

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 19 Minutes 21 Seconds

Ms Christine Watson, Baldock Beats Waste, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their grant application and drew attention to the following:

- Main focus was to encourage the residents of Baldock to look differently at waste, especially packaging and single-use plastic;
- Offered information and advice of what can and can't be recycled discussing alternatives on both packaging materials and reduction of recycling;
- Had been present and involved in several public events;
- Facebook page - articles that had been posted attracted between 100 and 500 people viewers;
- Twitter account to spread their word and were considering an Instagram account;
- Posters and leaflet distribution;
- Set up at the Community Centre a collection for crisp packets which were then sent on to Terracycle for recycling; and
- Waste Management discussions with several local business and litter picking outings had taken place.

Ms Watson informed the Committee that Baldock Beats Waste aimed to change perceptions and recycling habits for the benefit of the environment, provide information and influence. They had decided to look into the SAS Scheme to gain Plastic Free status for Baldock, which would inevitably incur more expenditure. Baldock Beats Waste's request for grant funding was mainly to assist with venue hire and publicity costs.

All of the Members of Baldock and District Committee asked questions of Baldock Beats Waste and contributed to debate and discussion of the application.

The Chairman thanked Ms Watson for her presentation.

21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - TURNING WORLDS

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 32 Minutes 59 Seconds

Ms Jane Turner, Turning Worlds, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their grant application and drew attention to the following:

- Turning Worlds was a non-profit organisation that focused on performance and participation, a dance theatre group for both men and women;
- No specific dance genre;
- Vocal Techniques;
- Theatre Games;
- Since 2005 the organisation had been based predominantly in East Anglia and London;

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- Wished to run a series of Workshops for residents of Baldock aged 55+ at The Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre;
- Pilot project had taken place and they wished to continue and develop what had already been successfully started - drop in workshops were already well established with Tuesday evening sessions; and
- Social engagement – giving a sense of wellbeing for both individual and group health, in response to the key findings of the Centre for Policy on Ageing Report which stated that older people do not get enough exercise.

Ms Turner confirmed that they had already run a workshop with the involvement of The Women's Institute. Whilst it would be a big networking process, ideally Turning Worlds wished to interconnect with other groups as opposed to competing with them.

All of the Members of Baldock and District Committee asked questions of Turning Worlds and contributed to the debate of the application for grant funding.

The Chairman thanked Ms Turner for her presentation.

22 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICT, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 54 Minutes 40 Seconds

The Democratic Services Manager and The Electoral Services Manager presented the report on the Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Consultation.

The following appendices accompanied the report:

Appendix A – Polling District Schedule - identified the polling districts, polling places and polling stations for the entire District, along with justification as to any proposed changes.

Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Appendix C – Maps (including District Boundaries)

The Democratic Services Manager explained to the Committee that it was a legal requirement for the Council to conduct a full review every 5 years of UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places and that the current review must conclude by 31 January 2020. She further explained that the review was of polling districts and polling places, however, it was accepted that polling stations were linked and therefore the review had incorporated the stations.

The Chairman thanked The Democratic Services Manager and The Electoral Services Manager for their presentation.

RESOLVED: That Polling Places, as illustrated in the Returning Officer's Proposals set out in Appendices A and C be designated.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places. The compulsory review must commence and conclude between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).

23 ANNUAL UPDATE ON SECTION 106 OBLIGATIONS FOR BALDOCK AND DISTRICT

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 58 Minutes 36 Seconds

The Development and Conservation Manager presented his report entitled Annual Update on S106 Obligations for Baldock Committee and provided the following information:

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- Unlike previous reports the format of information presented had been altered to more accurately reflect the diminishing role of discretionary Section 106 funds and the associated tables reflected that change of emphasis;
- Table 1 and 1a set out the details of all new Section 106 Obligations during the financial year 2018/19;
- Table 2 set out details of all payments allocated in Baldock from retained funds during the financial year 2018/19; and
- Table 3 and 3a set out details of remaining unallocated funds.

The Development and Conservation Manager drew the Members attention to the Sustainable Transport unallocated funds, specifically £15,913.32 in Ashwell. He informed that a new Transport Officer had recently been appointed at NHDC who would be looking closely at ways in which sustainable contributions element of the discretionary funding could be spent particularly within the smaller villages. The Transport Officer would co-ordinate meetings with Hertfordshire County Council

The following Members raised questions and took part in the debate:

Councillor Steve Jarvis
Councillor Michael Muir
Councillor Tom Tyson
Councillor Michael Weeks

- The Development and Conservation Manager confirmed that there was a requirement to identify a project for funding in a Section 106 Agreement at the time the planning application was submitted.
- Parish Councils were asked to comment on planning applications as they were required to consider the projects they felt should be included in a Section 106 Agreement.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report entitled Annual Update on S106 Obligations for Baldock and District be noted;
- (2) That a report shall continue to be presented on Section 106 contributions to the Baldock Committee on an annual basis;
- (3) That S106 Monitoring and Transport Officer be requested to investigate specific fund allocation in regard to parking issues in Baldock;
- (4) That, other than where a contribution has been negotiated for a specific purpose or project, Ward Members of the area where the Section 106 Obligation or Unilateral Undertaking funding is generated and the Area Committee be consulted prior to funding being allocated away from that area.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) To ensure that there is a robust system for negotiating and managing Section 106 Obligations and Unilateral Undertakings, that records activity for each financial year and is placed in the public domain.
- (2) To ensure that the process is kept under constant review and Member scrutiny and that the risk associated with this activity is managed in an appropriate manner.

24 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – Start of Item – 1 Hour 17 Minutes 9 Seconds

The Communities Engagement Officer and Councillor Jim McNally updated the Committee on recently held, and forthcoming Baldock Community Events. The Communities Engagement Officer stated that Baldock was very much a community town that punched above it's weight in terms of the activities that take place, he further stated that these events were mainly due to Baldock Events Forum and provided updates on the following:

- Big Lunch;
- Baldock Cycle Challenge;
- Street Food Heroes;
- Baldock 5km Rat Run;
- Baldstock Community Music Festival; and
- Baldock Fair

Councillor Jim McNally reported that Balstock Community Music Festival was, and remained, the largest free festival in Hertfordshire. Five nominated charities had each received an equal share of £12,500 raised that year. Going forward, Balstock intended to take place two years on, one year off. Councillor McNally confirmed that Balstock would return next year in 2020. Councillor McNally further informed:

- Baldock Christmas Fair – would take place on 7 December 2019, followed immediately by The Lights Ceremony Switch On. The Christmas Tree was being provided through Baldock Events Forum and Baldock Rotary Club would be dressing the tree.
- New Event – Formal Black and Gold Ball – would take place on 16 November 2016 and held in St Mary's Church Hall. The charity that had been nominated that year and would benefit from proceeds was named as Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust. Tickets were strictly limited to 88 people.
- Community Fireworks – would take place on 9 November 2019, at a new venue – St Mary's Junior School. Tickets were priced at £5 per person, (advance purchase on-line) or £7, (purchased on the night). Profits would be split amongst Community Schools.

On behalf of Baldock and District Committee, Councillor Michael Muir thanked The Communities Engagement Officer for all of his time and hard work that went into assisting with the hugely successfully run events.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That funding should be initially allocated from the 2018/19 carry forward and not the 2019/20 base budget;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Baldock be endorsed.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team; and
- (2) To inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are

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performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.

25 GRANT APPLICATION - BALDOCK ROTARY CLUB

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,150 be awarded to Baldock Rotary Club to assist with purchase of Christmas Lights and Decorations and the hire of Cherry Picker for installing Christmas Tree Lights.

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

26 GRANT APPLICATION - BALDOCK BEATS WASTE

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £350 be awarded to Baldock Beats Waste to assist with Venue Hire and Publicity Costs.

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

27 GRANT APPLICATION - TURNING WORLDS

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Turning Worlds to assist with Venue Hire, Publicity and Equipment Costs.

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

28 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

There were no ward matters raised by Members.

The meeting closed at 9.02 pm

Chairman