

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE
(Baldock, Arbury and Weston and Sandon Wards)**

**Meeting held at The Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock
on 22 May 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: *Councillors M.E. Weeks (Chairman), A.D. Young (Vice-Chairman), S.K. Jarvis, Marilyn Kirkland and I.J. Knighton.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Sue Cawthra (Planning Compliance Officer), Richard Tiffin (Area Planning Officer), Stuart Izzard (Senior Community Development Officer (Youth)) and Donna Levett (Committee & Member Services Officer).*

ALSO PRESENT: *Councillor F.J. Smith (Leader of the Council), Roger Harrison (Public Relations Manager) and 17 members of the public.*

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Baldock & District Committee of the new Civic Year and explained that he had been elected as Chairman of the Committee for the year, with Councillor A.D. Young as his Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman expressed the Committee's thanks to Councillor I.J. Knighton for the diplomatic and democratic way in which he had acted as Chairman of the Committee for the last Civic Year, and thanked him for his work during his time in office.

The Chairman further announced that, as there were a number of members of the public present for planning items, he would bring those items forward for consideration before the Community Development items.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M.R.M. Muir.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

6. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

7. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor M.E. Weeks declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Baldock & District Area Committee Development & Area Visioning Budgets 2006/2007 – Grant Application: Royal British Legion as he was a member of the Royal British Legion. Councillor Weeks stated that he had taken no part in the submission of the application and would therefore remain in the Chair but would not speak or vote on this matter.

Councillor M.E. Weeks declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Baldock & District Area Committee Development & Area Visioning Budgets 2006/2007 – Annual Small Grants for Baldock Senior Citizens Group and Baldock Town Twinning Association - as he was North Hertfordshire District Council's representative on those organisations. Councillor Weeks reserved his right to speak and vote on these matters.

Councillor I.J. Knighton declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Baldock & District Area Committee Development & Area Visioning Budgets 2006/2007 – Annual Small Grants for Baldock Senior Citizens Group and Baldock Town Twinning Association - as he was North Hertfordshire District Council's representative on those organisations. Councillor Knighton reserved his right to speak and vote on these matters.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr James MacRae had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 05/01400/1 – Church Farm House, Ashanger Lane, Clothall – and its associated listed building application (reference 05/01399/1LB). Mr MacRae was speaking as an objector to the application, on behalf of the residents of Clothall Parish.

Key points raised by Mr MacRae included:

- The documentation submitted by the applicant was misleading and inaccurate, including the plans on display;
- Works carried out without permission included fresh turf being laid out in fields meant for horses, felling of mature trees, and the filling of a pond with building rubble and soil;
- Residents acknowledged the need for remedial works on the house but stressed that work should only be done with appropriate permissions and enforcement action should be taken where this was not the case;
- The proposed stables would detract from the rural aspect of the lane as valued by residents, whereas siting almost anywhere else within the 5-acre field would have meant they were not visible from the lane.

Mr MacRae also submitted a petition with 41 signatories, with the following subject:

We the undersigned wish to make those who are elected to represent our interests aware of:

- our continued opposition to the planning application for Church Farm House, Clothall; for the reasons stated in correspondence and Parish Council meetings, and;*
- our extreme displeasure at the apparent lack of enforcement of Planning and Listed Building regulations thus far.*

The Chairman accepted the petition from Mr MacRae on behalf of the Committee.

In conclusion, Mr MacRae asked the Committee to reject the application relating to the stables, and to ensure that the work on the house was carefully monitored to make sure it complied with the submitted plans and approval.

Mr J. Milne had also given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding the applications for Church Farm House. Mr Milne was the architect for the proposed scheme and was speaking as the applicant's agent.

Mr Milne informed the Committee that the house was in poor condition when the applicant moved in and thus needed a lot of remedial works. He stressed that the house was to remain a family home, not to be converted into a multiple-occupancy dwelling, and that the applicant was now aware of the property's Listed Building status and working to implement the remedial works within the confines of that status. He stated that there were no sustainable objections to the proposed works, and expressed his hope that the Committee would grant the permissions.

The Chairman thanked Mr MacRae and Mr Milne for their presentations and informed them that all the information given would be considered by the Committee when determining the applications.

9. CHAMPION NEWS

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) since the meeting of the Committee held on 10 April 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

Further to his report, the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) informed the Committee that Hertfordshire County Council would be holding feedback consultation weeks for the Baldock & Letchworth Local Transport Plan in June 2006. These would be at Baldock Library from 5 to 12 June 2006, and Letchworth Library from 12 to 19 June 2006.

With regard to ongoing works relating to the Baldock Bypass, the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) informed the Committee that construction of the northbound off slip lane would now not finish until September or October 2006. In response to questions from the Committee, he stated that there had been several concerns raised about paraphernalia left behind by work on the Bypass. He informed the Committee that if Members informed him of any problems as they became aware of them, he would notify the appropriate officers of them to ensure problems were remedied as soon as possible. The Committee also expressed concern about the potential for illegal encampments at the site office when it was vacated and stressed the need for appropriate measures to prevent this.

The Committee noted that the Baldock Festival had proceeded in an organised and successful manner, and that the Medieval Street Fair had been well attended despite poor weather conditions. The Committee expressed their thanks to the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) for all the time and effort that he committed to ensuring that the Baldock Festival ran smoothly.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) to promote greater community capacity and well-being for communities in the Baldock & District area be endorsed.

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

10. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2004/05

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee, together with 3 additional grant applications that had been received.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) confirmed that he was investigating how the imposition of a Drought Order in North Hertfordshire would affect the maintenance of the hanging baskets that the Committee had funded for the town centre, and would inform the Committee once he had a response.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted;
- (2) That the Annual Small Grant of £1,354 to the Baldock Senior Citizens Group be agreed;

- (3) That the Annual Small Grant of £154.50 to the Baldock Town Twinning Association be agreed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and ensured actions were performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;
- (2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

11. GRANT APPLICATION – ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

RESOLVED: That the sum of £500 be awarded to the Royal British Legion as a financial contribution toward the development of a Baldock & District Area Branch, such monies to be allocated as follows:

- £125 from Baldock East Ward Development Budget
- £375 from Baldock Town Ward Development Budget

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

12. GRANT APPLICATION – HERTS & BEDS EDUCATION TRUST

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) presented a grant application from the Herts & Beds Education Trust to the Committee. He explained that, whilst the Trust mainly worked through running school assemblies on citizenship and social rights and responsibilities, the proposal in this instance was to employ a sports teacher to work with disengaged young people referred from schools in the area, primarily Knights Templar. He also informed the Committee that he was working with the Trust to apply for a Community Safety grant and secure further funding.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) stated that the proposal was for the scheme to be based either at the Knights Templar or Brandles sites. The scheme would be extra-curricular, and it was hoped that arrangements could be completed before the end of the summer term, ready for the scheme to start in September.

Whilst the Committee supported the general concept of the scheme, it was felt that not enough information had been provided for a proper assessment to be made. The Committee also felt that they would benefit from more information about the Herts & Beds Education Trust generally, and about their previous experience in running such schemes.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That no funding be granted to the Herts & Beds Education Trust at this meeting;
- (2) That a representative of the Herts & Beds Education Trust be invited to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 3 July 2006, to make a presentation in support of their application.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) To ensure the Committee is fully apprised of the details of the proposed project in order to make an informed decision when determining the grant application by the Herts & Beds Education Trust;

(2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

13. GRANT APPLICATION – BYGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the sum of £360 be awarded from the Arbury Ward Development Budget to Bygrave Parish Council as a financial contribution toward the purchase of a Lawn Mower.

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard oral representations in relation to planning application reference 05/01400/1 and listed building application reference 05/01399/1LB, which related to Church Farm House, Ashanger Lane, Clothall, from:

- a) Mr James MacRae, objecting to the applications on behalf of residents of Clothall Parish
- b) Mr J. Milne, architect for the scheme, as the applicant's representative

Details of these representations can be found at Minute 8 above.

RESOLVED: To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

SCHEDULE

Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
06/00335/1	191 & 193 Weston Way, Baldock Erection of linked 2 & 3 storey block comprising 17 two bedroom and 1 one bedroom flats, 26 surface parking spaces, new 'T' junction access onto Weston Way, amenity area and ancillary works following demolition of existing dwelling as variation of planning permission ref 05/00013/1 granted 21 July 2005.	GRANTED (as per report)
06/00689/1CM	Children's Home adjacent land south of New Farm, Weston Way, Baldock Outline application for a Children's Home and associated works.	COMMENTS ENDORSED (see (a) below)
06/00492/1	Land Adjacent to Brookside, Sandon Lane, Buntingford Formation of ménage enclosed by 1.7m fence.	GRANTED (as per report)
05/01399/1LB	Church Farm House, Ashanger Lane, Clothall Single storey rear extension, dormer window, retention of replacement windows and removal of one window, exposure of existing oak ceiling beams.	GRANTED (see (b) below)
05/01400/1	Church Farm House, Ashanger Lane, Clothall Single storey rear extension with dormer window. Detached building and fencing to tennis court. Change of use of land for grazing of domestic horses and erection of stables.	SPLIT DECISION (see (c) below)

06/00371/1HH **42 Station Road, Ashwell** **GRANTED**
Detached single storey garage (as amended by drawings 2B and 3B received 26.04.06) (as per report)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00689/1CM, the comments to be forwarded to the County Council in response to its formal consultation be **ENDORSED**, subject to the amendment of comment 1 to read:

The District Council requests that the County Planning Authority consider very carefully, on an ongoing basis, the views and concerns of local residents and consultees regarding the management and operation of the approved development.

- (b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to listed building application reference 05/01399/1LB, Listed Building Consent be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control, with the amendment of conditions 2 and 4 to require the works to be completed within 3 months of the date of the decision notice.
- (c) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/01400/1, planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control, for the single storey rear extension with dormer window, the detached garage building and the fencing to the tennis court (development A).

Further, it was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **REFUSED** for the change of use of land for the grazing of domestic horses and the erection of the stables (development B) for the following reason:

The use of the land, subject of the application, for the grazing and stabling of horses, would be likely to occasion an intensification in vehicular activity to and from Ashanger Lane prejudicial to highway safety contrary to Policy 29 of the County Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011. Moreover, the application is not submitted with sufficient details to enable the Council to adequately assess the impact of any works, to improve sight lines and general access arrangements, on the street scene in this part of the settlement.

15. **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

The Planning Compliance Officer presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control which sought authorisation from the Committee to take enforcement action in respect of an unauthorised change of use of the first floor of the stable/garage at Cedar House, Beckfield Lane, Sandon.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the Head of Legal & Democratic Services being satisfied with the evidence, the Planning Control & Conservation Manager be authorised to issue and serve an Enforcement Notice to bring about the cessation of the unauthorised use as a self-contained dwelling and convert the first floor of the stables/garage back to use incidental to the main house, with a time for compliance of 3 months.

REASON FOR DECISION: To bring about cessation in the current unauthorised use of the first floor of the stables/garage as a self-contained dwelling, which is contrary to guidance given in the District Local Plan, County Structure Plan and national planning guidance.

16. **PLANNING APPEALS**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 10 April 2006:

Appellant Mr T Coates
Reference number 05/01860/1
Address 1A Hadrian Way, Baldock
Proposal Detached bungalow
Method Written representations.

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 10 April 2006:

Appellant Mr G Dear
Reference number 05/01558/1HH
Address 12 Barley Rise, Baldock
Proposal First floor side and front extensions.
Decision Appeal ALLOWED

Appellant Mr and Mrs Bail
Reference number 05/00499/1HH
Address 5 The Tene, Baldock
Proposal Two storey front extension.
Decision Appeal DISMISSED

The meeting closed at 9.11 p.m.

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Chairman