

06/12/2021

Baldock Town Talk

Present:

- Cllr Jim McNally (CHAIR - NHDC)
- Cllr Michael Muir (NHDC & County Councillor)
- Cllr Michael Weeks (NHDC)
- Cllr Tom Tyson (NHDC)
- Ashley Hawkins (Community Engagement Officer)
- **MOA = Member of Audience**

Apologies:

- Cllr Steve Jarvis (NHDC & County Councillor)

Cllr McNally opened the Town Talk meeting at 630pm and welcomed the 3 MOA to the meeting. Cllr McNally explained the format of the meeting and asked for any questions from the floor. Three issues were raised as followed:

1. Update on BA4 of The Local Plan
2. Crabtree Lane
3. Baldock Café Culture
4. Dark Unlit Area on road to Osbourn Court by side of Tesco's

Update on BA4 of the Local Plan

JM opened the discussion on The Local Plan by stating that sites do not need to be on the plan to be developed. JM also stressed that there is an assumption that if an area is on the plan it will be granted but this is not guaranteed. Also sites not on the plan can be put on for development.

The Local Plan is still with the Inspector and the findings are complex to go through and his findings which were due before Christmas are now expected by March 2022. MM added that the report from the Inspector was due in November but that March was now a more realistic date.

JM stated that there was originally 4500 homes planned for Baldock but as a result of local pressure, this figure had been reduced by over 900 and is likely to come down even more.

With regards to BA4 MM stated that Developers are trying to cut down on social housing and that this will come to Planning Committee as it is over ½ hectare in size. MM said that the Planning Committee had refused two plans on Green Belt but that the Construction Company did submit an appeal and the decision was over-turned.

Crabtree Lane

MOA informed the Councillors that there was a tree down on the Industrial End side which had been moved to the edge of the path but was still an obstruction and difficult to pass. MM said he would log the issue on the Highways Reporting website and that it would be removed from Highways.

The MOA also mentioned the level of litter and broken glass on Crabtree Lane and asked what the current schedule was for cleaning in the town. The MOA was informed that the Town Centre was cleaned on a daily basis but that this was not the case outside of the Town Centre. JM reminded the MOA of the need to Log this issue with the Waste Team and to get a reference number but requested that the Baldock Community Engagement Officer log the broken glass issue with Jeanette Lowden.

Café Culture

MOA informed the Councillors that whilst he is not against eateries and cafes having tables and chairs on the grassed areas and pavements of the High Street, he did feel that in some occasions it was making it difficult for people with buggies or mobility scooters to get through without going on the grass. MM, MW and JM said that they would speak to the various businesses and ask that due consideration be given to pedestrians.

Dark Unlit Area on road to Osbourn Court by side of Tesco's

MOA raised the above issue and stated that his partner had fallen over in the area due to the poor lighting. The area in question was the path from the lodge bungalow and then the area known as the secret garden which is owned by Tesco's. The lights near the garden were not working and the MOA was asked to contact the Tesco Store Manager to get this matter addressed. It was suggested that the MOA also copied in the local councillors so there could be a two way approach to the issue. In terms of the lights on the path leading to Osbourn Court, none of the lamp columns were numbered which indicates that they have not yet been adopted by Highways. The road has not yet been adopted and is privately owned which means that neither NHDC or HCC have any power to address the problem but that pressure should be put on the landowner to get the lighting issue addressed.

MM said that NHDC had previously contacted the landowner to have the road resurfaced due to numerous complaints about the surface and that this was addressed.

