

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting
held in the Council Chamber, Chantry Centre, Chantry Way, CM11 2AP
on Thursday 12th December 2024 at 7pm**

Present: Chairman: Cllr M Thomas
Vice-Chairman: Cllr J Devlin

Councillors: A Adshead, P Bunyan, R Clark, E Davies, M Dear, S Dickson, J Henshaw, C May, M Moore, K Mordecai, G St Pierre, H Stuart, G Talbot, A Talboys, J Tutton

Also present: the Town Clerk

77. Apologies for Absence
Cllr K Herlock, I Scott

78. Members Declarations of Interest with regard to items on the Agenda
None.

79. Public Participation Session with respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest
None.

80. Town Council Minutes

Members **(a)** received and considered the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 24th October 2024, and **(b)** approved the signing of the minutes as a true record.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th October 2024 be approved and adopted.

81. Chairman's Report

Cllr Thomas had provided a written report informing members of the events he had attended on behalf of the Town Council since the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: information noted.

82. Committee Meetings

(a) Planning Committee - Cllr J Tutton, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meetings held on 29th October, 12 November, 26th November and 10th December. He advised that a total of 34 applications had been considered with 12 of them being objected to. Cllrs May, Devlin, Dear, Dixon and Tutton are working as a group to prepare the Council's response to the Local Plan consultation. Cllr Tutton also presented a Recommendation that the Town Council formally writes to Basildon Council to express concerns over the Green Belt Study Final Report 2023.

RESOLVED: that a letter is sent to Basildon Council regarding the Town Council's concerns over flawed and inconsistent evidence regarding Billericay contained in the Green Belt Study Final Report 2023.

(b) Health, Well-being and Environment Committee - Cllr M Moore, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2024. Members were advised that the Billericay Cycling Campaign had attended to present

their forthcoming projects, the new benches are now on Sun Corner, the Events working party will have a budget for events in the Chantry Centre during 2025-26 and the Committee is finding out whether the hanging baskets can be mounted higher for next summer so as to avoid them being dislodged by high-sided vehicles.

(c) Finance & General Purposes Committee - Cllr A Adshead, Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2024. He presented four recommendations and it was:

RESOLVED: (i) that a reserves policy is approved and adopted; (ii) election expenses are funded from an earmarked reserve, (iii) £50,000 is transferred from general reserves to the Chantry maintenance earmarked reserve; (iv) the Christmas Lights earmarked reserve is closed at the end of this financial year.

RESOLVED: the minutes of all the above meetings are approved and adopted.

83. Vacancy on Planning Committee

Cllr Tutton advised members that although he had resigned as Chairman of Planning his intention was to remain a member of the Committee after taking a short break.

RESOLVED: information noted.

84. Estimates and Precept Requirement 2025-26

Members received and considered the following:

(a) the draft budget for 2025-26, and;

(b) to approve a 0% increase on the precept for 2025-26 making the precept demand £320,382.60, therefore a Band D property remains at £26.01.

RESOLVED: (i) that the draft budget is approved and; (ii) that the Precept for 2025-26 is set at £320,382.60 and that the precept demand is issued to Basildon Borough Council.

85. Interim Internal Audit

Members received and considered the interim internal audit report which was undertaken by Heelis and Lodge on 21st November 2024.

RESOLVED: information noted.

86. Vexatious and Persistent Complainants Policy

Members received and considered the above policy which is required due to Council staff having to deal with a small number of unreasonably persistent or vexatious complainants which take up a disproportionate amount of officer time. Some small amendments to the text were discussed and agreed.

RESOLVED: that following the amendments, the policy is approved and adopted.

87. Courses and Conferences

Members received a listing of forthcoming courses from the EALC

RESOLVED: information noted.

88. Items for Information

Members received and considered the following:

(a) link to the Government consultation re Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Meetings which closes on 19th December 2024. All members were encouraged to submit their response as individuals.

RESOLVED: information noted

89. Consideration of Items for Press Release/Social Media

- Details of the precept for 2025-26
- New park benches on Sun Corner
- The Council thoroughly analysing and responding to the Local Plan in depth
- Two letters to BBC – flawed evidence and concerns over Local Plan consultation being mostly online
- Budget for Events WP to initiate events

90. Questions from the Press and Public

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.44pm

Cllr ThomasDate
Chairman