

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting
held in the Council Chamber, Chantry Centre, Chantry Way, CM11 2AP
on Thursday 20th March 2025 at 7pm**

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

Councillors: A Adshead, R Clark, E Davies, M Dear, C E Butler, K Herlock, B Lammin, C May, M Moore, K Mordecai, G St.Pierre, I Scott, H Stuart, A Talboys, J Tutton

Also present: the Town Clerk and four members of the public

116. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs P Bunyan, J Henshaw, G Talbot

117. Members Declarations of Interest with regard to items on the Agenda

None.

118. Co-Option

Members considered four applicants for co-option, and following the vote it was;

RESOLVED: (i) than Benjamin Lammin is co-opted to East Ward, and; (ii) Cien Elan Butler is co-opted to West Ward.

Both councillors signed a declaration of acceptance of office and took their seat at the table.

119. Public Participation Session with respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest

None.

120. Town Council Minutes

Members (a) received and considered the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 30th January 2025, and (b) approved the signing of the minutes as a true record.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2025 be approved and adopted.

121. Chairman's Report

Cllr Thomas gave a verbal report to members of recent events he has attended on behalf of the Town Council since the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: information noted.

122. Committee Meetings

(a) Planning Committee - Cllr C May, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meetings held on 4th and 18th February and 4th and 18th March 2025. He advised that a total of 29 applications had been considered, with 9 of those objected to. Planning Committee members are also meeting outside committee meetings to consider further responses to the Norwich/Tilbury pylon project and the Local Plan Regulation 18 part 2 consultation.

(b) Health, Well-being and Environment Committee - Cllr M Moore, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2025. She advised those present that the Committee is arranging for the War Memorial to be cleaned and have some repair work done, the Countryside Walks leaflets will be going onto the new website in screen readable format, and that a reprint of the Town Trail walks leaflet will go ahead following a check that all plaques are still in place. Councillors attended a litter bin roadshow at the Chantry Centre and there are two litter picks planned for 2025. The first on 26th April and then a second one prior to Remembrance Sunday.

(c) Finance & General Purposes Committee - Cllr A Adshead, Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2025 and advised that the donation to the Human Kind café has now been granted. Cllr Adshead then explained the changes in the new financial regulations and it was:

RESOLVED: (i) that the new Financial Regulations are approved and adopted, and (ii) that the minutes of all the above meetings are approved.

123. Vacancies on Committees

Members were advised that there is currently one vacancy on the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Heather Stuart joins the Planning Committee.

124. Councillor Biographies for Website

Members were reminded to send a photograph and personal profile to the Town Clerk for the new website if they have not already done so.

RESOLVED: information noted.

125. Courses and Conferences

Members received a listing of forthcoming courses from the Essex Association of Local Councils.

RESOLVED: information noted.

RESOLVED: to change the order of the next two Agenda items.

Cllr Dear requested that any proposals on the next two items be subject to a recorded vote.

126. Emerging Local Plan – Co-ordinated Defence

Members considered the notes from a meeting on 20th February with members of other local councils and the Billericay District Residents Association and Billericay Action Group. Members were advised by Cllr Devlin that the decision regarding Laindon Road cannot be challenged, only the process, therefore the Council has to determine whether Basildon did this in a way that was irresponsible. He also said that members of BBC's planning committee followed their officer's advice, which was that in the opinion of two barristers the land constituted grey belt and therefore the decision was lawful. Cllr Thomas said that the Council has £15,000 set aside for professional advice, and the Council owes it to the people of Billericay to at least find out whether anything can be done. Members accepted that challenges should only be made if reasonable and responsible and that consequences should be fully considered. Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED: information noted.

127. Response to FOI Request made to Basildon Borough Council

Members received and considered the response from Basildon Borough Council (BBC) to the Council's FOI request in respect of the planning application 24/00762/OUT Land West of Laindon Road. Members expressed dismay that BBC had hidden behind legal privilege and Cllr Dear suggested that the Council obtains information from the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) before taking any further action. Members agreed that although there is now nothing that can be done about the Laindon Road development, it would be worth concentrating on the emerging local plan.

Cllr Dear proposed that the Town Council seeks advice from NALC via the EALC on whether anything can be done about the local authorities' definition of grey belt as it does not fit the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria. Seconded by Cllr Scott.

RESOLVED: all councillors voted in favour of the above proposal.

Discussion took place about a possible referral to the Information Commissioner's Office and Cllr Lammin advised members that if the barrister's advice has been shared to a wider body – outside the legal function of the Council – then that may waive their right to legal privilege.

Cllr Dear proposed that a further Freedom of Information request is submitted to Basildon Borough Council regarding **(i)** the sharing of information as detailed above, and; **(ii)** requesting the names of the elected members of Planning Committee that attended the NPPF training on 28th January 2025, as this training was after the date that application 24/00762/OUT was granted. Seconded by Cllr Thomas.

128. Association of Basildon Local Councils

Members received and considered a document from the Association of Basildon Local Councils which was submitted to Basildon Borough Council at the Local Councils Liaison Committee on 5th March 2025. Both Cllr Dear and Cllr Devlin referred to this meeting during previous discussions.

RESOLVED: information noted.

129. Items for Information

Members received the following:

(a) notes from the EALC Clerk's Devolution Forum held on 26th February 2025

(b) The current consultation about Essex devolution is available online and closes on 19th April 2025.

(c) letter from the EALC Chair about proposed changes to the organisation

(d) information about increased parking charges in BBC car parks from 1st April 2025.

Members discussed whether this could be stalled and Cllr Adshead proposed that the Town Council approaches the area committees to provide the funding.

Seconded by Cllr May.

RESOLVED: **(i)** The Town Clerk approaches the BBC Billericay area committee regarding parking charges, and **(ii)** that in all other respects the above information is noted.

130. Items for Consideration for Press Release/Social Media

- New council members
- High Street banking Hub for Billericay
- Town Council following up FOI request response

131. Questions from the Press and Public

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.24pm

Cllr ThomasDate
Chairman