

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting
held in the Council Chamber, Chantry Centre, Chantry Way, CM11 2AP
on Thursday 30th January 2025 at 7pm**

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

Councillors: A Adshead, P Bunyan, R Clark, E Davies, J Henshaw, K Herlock, C May, M Moore, K Mordecai, I Scott, H Stuart, A Talboys, J Tutton

Also present: the Town Clerk

98. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs M Dear, G St. Pierre, G Talbot

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

None.

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

None.

101. Town Council Minutes

Members **(a)** received and considered the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 16th January 2025, and **(b)** approved the signing of the minutes as a true record.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2025 be approved and adopted.

102. Chairman's Report

Cllr Thomas gave a verbal report to members of recent events he has attended. He is judging the BCCS poster competition for Children's Mental Health Week which takes place on 3rd to 9th February, and on 27th January along with the Town Clerk he hosted members of the School Council from Buttsbury Juniors to talk about the Town Council and the role of a Town Councillor.

RESOLVED: information noted.

103. Committee Meetings

(a) Planning Committee - Cllr C May, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meetings held on 7th and 21st January 2025. He advised that a total of 14 applications had been considered, with 7 of those objected to. Due to the types of applications there is a lot of representation from the public. More applications are being presented for residential development in Radford Way which the Committee feels is a commercial area and should be protected as such. Other applications considered included a solar farm which means the loss of good agricultural land, and a high-density development of 40 homes and a care home next to Billericay Town Football Club. Cllr May attended Basildon Council's Planning Committee on 8th January to present the Town Council's objections to the Laindon Road development, however this was approved which led to the Extraordinary Town Council meeting. The Council's response to the Local Plan consultation regulation 18 was submitted on 9th January.

(b) Health, Well-being and Environment Committee - Cllr M Moore, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2025. She advised those present that the Events working party are lighting the beacon on Sun Corner to celebrate VE-Day 80 but have decided not to have fireworks. The marketing of the Chantry Centre will be looked at after the VE-Day 80 event. The Community Open Day will be taking place on 22nd March.

(c) Finance & General Purposes Committee - Cllr A Adshead, Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2025. The donation to the Human Kind café has been deferred as more information is required and the next edition of the Town Crier is due out in early March. Cllr Bunyan said he had been approached to take part in a Government survey about youth parliament, as had Cllrs St Pierre and Talboys. A light has been placed on the low wall at the front of Chantry following a recent accident and a business rates rebate has been received

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

104. Legal Fees

Cllr Thomas explained to members that there may be issues arising which would require a legal opinion and asked members to consider setting money aside for fees. Following discussion, Cllr Clark proposed that a budget line is created for professional fees. Seconded by Cllr Thomas.

RESOLVED: to create a 2025/25 budget line for professional fees.

Cllr Talboys proposed that the professional fees amount be £10,000. An amendment to this proposal was made by Cllr Herlock to increase the amount to £15,000. This amendment was seconded by Cllr Thomas.

RESOLVED: the amount set aside for professional fees in 2025/26 is £15,000.

105. Courses and Conferences

Members received a listing of forthcoming courses from the EALC.

RESOLVED: information noted.

106. Casual Vacancies

Members received and considered details of the two casual vacancies. No poll was claimed for East Ward, and if no poll is claimed for West Ward by 12th February both seats will be filled by co-option at full Council on 20th March 2025.

RESOLVED: information noted.

107. Vacancy on Planning Committee

No member put themselves forward at this time, therefore the vacancy remains.

RESOLVED: information noted

108. Appointment of Substitutes to Committees

No members put themselves forward to act as appointed substitutes, therefore the vacancies remain.

RESOLVED: information noted.

109. Civic Service 2025

Members discussed the format and attendance levels of previous services and following a proposal from Cllr Moore which was seconded by Cllr Davies it was:

RESOLVED: that a Civic Service is not held in 2025.

110. Annual Town Meeting 24th April 2025

Members were advised that it is a legal requirement for an annual meeting to be held between 1st March and 1st June each year. It's primary purpose is a meeting of the electorate to enable questions to be asked of the Town Council. In previous years speakers have been invited to try and encourage greater attendance by residents. Following discussion Cllr Stuart proposed that there is no speaker. Seconded by Cllr Moore.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Town Meeting takes place with no external speaker.

111. Emerging Local Plan – Co-ordinated defence

Cllr Thomas informed members he had been contacted by the Vice-Chair of the BDRA about working together with regards to the local plan. The issues are apparent and affecting not only Billericay residents but neighbouring parishes, and Cllr Thomas would like to open up discussions to see where the Town Council could provide support. A co-ordinated effort is the best way to work together in supporting residents. Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr Herlock that the Town Council facilitates a meeting at the Chantry Centre for parties to come together and share information on the local plan. Seconded by Cllr Thomas.

RESOLVED: (i) that the Town Council facilitates a meeting of interested groups to share local plan information, and; **(ii)** that the Chair of Council and Chair of Planning attend this meeting on behalf of the Town Council.

112. Meeting dates July 2025 to June 2026

RESOLVED: that the meeting dates are approved.

113. Items for Information

Members received and considered the following:

(a) a community special constable for Billericay will be starting their intensive training course at the start of February.

RESOLVED: information noted

114. Consideration of Items for Press Release/Social Media

- Community Open Day – 22nd March 2025

115. Questions from the Press and Public

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.37pm

Cllr ThomasDate
Chairman