



Billericay Town Council Annual Report 2024/2025

Billericay – A Great Place to Be

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024/25 Cllr Mark Thomas



It has been my pleasure to continue to serve on Billericay Town Council (BTC) as Chairman for another year. What a year it has been for the town that I have called "home" since 1973. I find it fantastic that there are so many voluntary and charitable groups and organisations that are continuing to be supported within the town. During the past year, it has been a privilege to actively support Dementia Week, Billericay Archaeological & Historical Society's 60th Anniversary, BTC's Civic Service, Children's Mental Health Week, organised by Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, to name just a few.

I recently attended the Induction & Collation Service of Revd Chris Arnold as the new Team Rector of Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry and would like to welcome Chris and his family to Billericay.

In June, BTC organised the lighting of the beacon and a ceremony to mark the 80th D-Day Anniversary on Sun Corner. In attendance were representatives from the Billericay Air and Army

Cadet Forces, Royal British Legion and Scouts and Guides.

In addition to attending many official engagements, BTC continues to support the Billericay Tree Wardens in their endeavours to protect and plant trees within our town. Along with fellow Councillors and volunteers, we recently planted 500 native tree saplings at South Green Junior School for their 'Miyazaki Forest Project.'

BTC continues to organise a couple of litter picks each year and recognise the excellent efforts of the Billericay Litter Pickers in helping to minimise the scourge of litter that blights our town's beautiful open spaces.

BTC recently held the annual Community Open Day to showcase local charities and voluntary organisations that make a huge contribution to the fabric of life in Billericay. We plan to continue to hold these Open Days as they promote the wide variety of organisations that attend these events.

Currently there are challenges facing Billericay. The most serious being the Government's sweeping reforms to planning resulting in

the excessive housing developments in and around Billericay and the loss of the green belt surrounding our town. BTC is doing everything within its powers to address this issue which is of deep concern to residents. BTC will explore all avenues to prevent unnecessary loss of the green belt and disproportionate housing developments. Our Planning Committee work to resist these planning applications and the Planning Committee Chairman's Report covers these efforts in greater detail.

Additionally, BTC is aware of the concern that proposed increased parking charges has caused residents. As Chairman I am monitoring the situation and liaising with the appropriate bodies. When the issue over parking charges is considered at a formal Full Town Council meeting, residents understandable concerns will form part of the decision making process.

Finally, there are proposed devolutionary changes to Local Government which will divide Essex into separate Unitary Authorities. BTC is keeping up to date with the proposals and whatever happens will represent the views of residents. BTC aims to continue to provide and improve our services to residents. ■

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY SPECIAL CONSTABLE SCHEME



Chairman Cllr Mark Thomas and Special Constable Matthew Thomas

In December 2017 Billericay Town Council was one of the first local councils to sign up to Essex Police's Community Special Constable scheme. This scheme enables town and parish councils to fund the expenses of a special constable who will be deployed in the area. It wasn't until July 2019 we had our first recruit, however he was already a special and had transferred from traffic division. Unfortunately Thom missed his old duties too much and returned to traffic. In the intervening years the Town Council has continued to promote the scheme and we are pleased to announce that persistence has paid off.

On 14th April the Town Council Chairman Mark Thomas had the pleasure of attending the attestation of our new community special constable Matthew Thomas at Essex Police Headquarters. We look forward to working with Matthew in his new role. If anyone is interested in following in Matthew's footsteps please see the link below for more information and details of how to apply: Community Special Constables|Essex Police. www.essex.police.uk/communityspecials ■

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr Adam Adshead



The Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) meets every 6 weeks. Tasked with overseeing the Council's financial activities it consists of 11 Councillors. Together with the Town Clerk they ensure the Town Council complies with Financial Regulations, closely managing and monitoring all income and expenditure throughout the year.

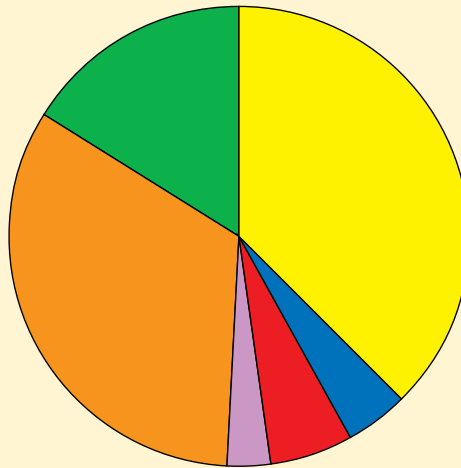
It also takes on those activities which don't naturally fall within the remit of our other Committees, the most significant of which is the operation of the Chantry Centre with income from the centre achieving its budgeted target during the year.

In contrast to many local authorities we were once again able to freeze our Precept for the coming year. The annual cost for a typical Band D household remains at £26.01 a year – just over £2 per month – ensuring that Billericay remains one of the lowest charging Parish/Town Councils.

Each year the Council sets aside funding for grants to existing community groups and to new community groups looking to establish themselves. During the year we were pleased to award £500 to the HumanKind cafe which will be used for craft materials for their Pioneer's Group

and board games for their new Board Games Club. We were also delighted to be able to support a new group, the Billericay Men's Group with room hire in the Chantry Centre to the value of £100

EXPENDITURE & RESERVES 2024/2025



- Administration & Council Members
- Recreational Facilities
- Christmas Lights
- Publications
- Chantry Way Centre
- Earmarked Reserves

from our Community Support Fund. This allowed the group, which focusses on men's mental health to focus on establishing themselves and we are very pleased to see that they have gone from strength to strength. ■

EXPENDITURE AND RESERVES

2023/24	EXPENDITURE	2024/25
£'000	DESCRIPTION	£'000
142	Administration & Council Members	166
20	Recreational Facilities	20
28	Christmas Lights	26
1	Other Projects	0
8	Publications	13
140	Chantry Way Centre	147
81	Earmarked Reserves	70
420	Total	442

INCOME

2023/24	INCOME	2024/25
£'000	SOURCE	£'000
317	Precept	319
22	Interest Earned	26
5	Outside Funding	22
76	Chantry Way Centre	75
420	Total	442

HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr Moira Moore



The Health, Wellbeing & Environment Committee works to enhance the environment around Billericay. We do this either by providing additional services or enhancing services provided by the borough and county councils.

In this past year the Town Council has paid for a refurbishment of the teen equipment in Lake Meadows park, and installed three new recycled plastic benches on Sun Corner so visitors can sit and enjoy that lovely green space during the warmer days. We also arranged for a new large planter outside Santander, this not only

complements the pole baskets and other planters but also prevents people parking dangerously on the pavement. We continue to provide all the floral displays in the High Street, including the planters and the flower beds at the War Memorial, during both summer and winter. The maintenance of our two green areas, Jim Shields Garden and Festival Garden by the Council's caretaker is working well as this means any required maintenance can

be dealt with quickly. We would still encourage residents to report any anti-social behaviour incidents in Festival Gardens to Essex Police so they can monitor the area by including it in their patrols.

The High Street litter picks have been reinstated and litter continues to be a regular discussion topic at meetings. The Town Council are still considering the installation of additional bins, including solar compactor ones, in partnership with Basildon Borough Council.

The High Street's Christmas Lights had five new icicle light locations along the front of buildings. Increasing the amount of string lights on each column and placing a large star static decoration in the beacon made a much better impact in 2024.

The Billericay Tree wardens continue to be the guardian's of the Town's trees and I would like to end this report by thanking John Smart who recently decided to stand down as the group's Chair. John was extremely knowledgeable about trees and bio-diversity within the town and he will be missed, however I am sure the group will continue working to enhance and preserve the environment in Billericay. ■



PLANNING COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr Chris May



With responsibility for scrutinising all planning applications within the Billericay Town boundary during a period of unprecedented activity it has been an intense year for the Planning Committee. I therefore wish to start by acknowledging and giving thanks to the serving Town Councillors and our Committee Clerk, without whom we couldn't function.

As the prolonged drafting and consultation process for the Basildon Local Plan grinds on Billericay has become the focus of interest for developers looking to gain outline planning permissions on prime sites before the new Local Plan comes into effect. In the last 12 months approvals have been granted for over 1000 new homes, largely and significantly utilising current Green Belt land.

Consequently, our meetings have seen a welcomed increase in interest from our Residents, with 110 attending through the year. Primarily, they are effectively lobbying us with objections to applications that are either developments on green belt land or applications that are considered inappropriate within the High Street or conservation area.

It is clear developers are increasingly successful in gaining outline planning permissions on prime sites in advance of, and not subject to, the new Local Plan when it comes into effect. With the support of Billericay residents, we are pulling apart and raising valid objections to these plans every time they come before us.

Over and above detailed work on individual planning applications has been the committee's commitment to providing detailed responses to statutory consultation exercises for the National Planning Framework, Local Plan and Norwich to Tilbury 'Great Grid Upgrade' (aka Pylons).

It is of great concern that the draft Local Plan sets out proposals to utilise the majority of the Green Belt that surrounds Billericay for development purposes, as displayed in the map. If brought to fruition, this will fundamentally change the nature of Billericay for, in our opinion, the worse. The Draft Local Plan lacks any detail as to what infrastructure improvements would be provided, how they will be adequately funded and planned strategically to the benefit of both existing and new Residents.

Outlined below is the raw data pertaining to the Committee's activity in 2024-2025;

Number of planning meetings held Mar 2024 – Mar 2025 = 26

Total number applications considered by the committee: Mar 24 – Mar 25 = 204*

Applications determined 114 applications – (BTC No Objection/Basildon Granted)

BTC Objected/Basildon Granted – 17 Applications
Of these our most common objections to the applications were:

- Poor and awkward design
- Development on the Green Belt
- Excessive bulk and height
- Over development
- Overlooking

BTC No Objection/Basildon Refused – 18 Applications

*The figures for determined applications don't add up to 204 as 38 applications have not been

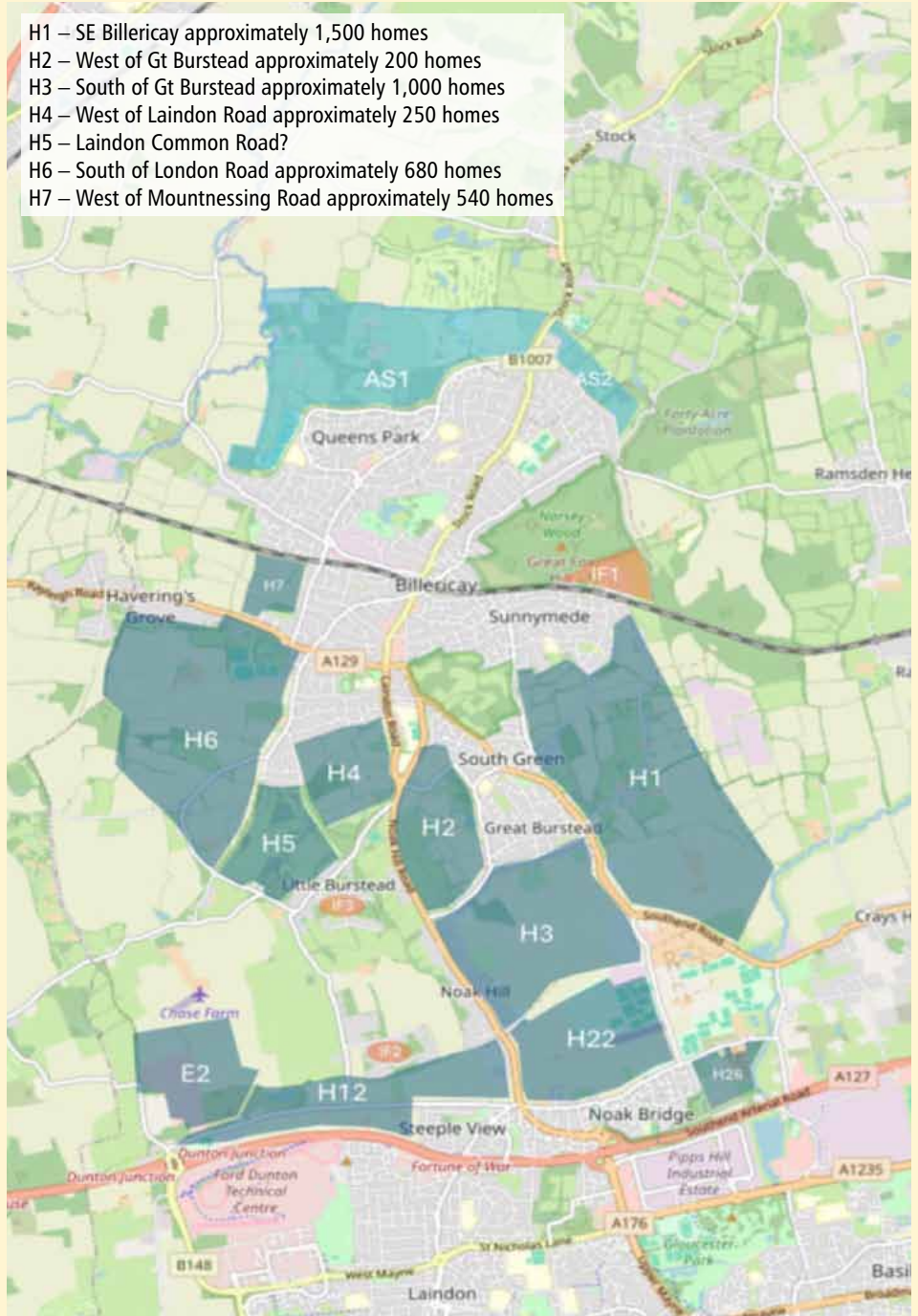
determined by Basildon yet.

Planning appeals – 63 were allowed, 3 were dismissed

Licensing applications considered – 7

In conclusion, we look forward to a challenging year ahead as the Local Plan preparation moves forward. We will continue to represent the interests of Residents in fighting for a plan which preserves Billericay as a vibrant, separate and green place to live. ■

- H1 – SE Billericay approximately 1,500 homes
- H2 – West of Gt Burstead approximately 200 homes
- H3 – South of Gt Burstead approximately 1,000 homes
- H4 – West of Laindon Road approximately 250 homes
- H5 – Laindon Common Road?
- H6 – South of London Road approximately 680 homes
- H7 – West of Mountnessing Road approximately 540 homes



HELLO FROM THE EDITOR Editor: Cllr Marie Dear



Welcome to the Annual Report which provides in depth information regarding the Town Council's committee work and finances. As there was a recent edition of the Town Crier it was decided to issue the Annual Report as a separate publication this time. Additionally, this is due to the importance of the reports, particularly the Planning Committee Report covering the planned developments which have created intense interest from residents. Plus the Chantry Centre

information shows the Centre is growing as a hub of social activity in the town for residents.

I hope you have enjoyed the Town Crier over the past year. It's amazing how much the Town Council has achieved and shared with residents. The next edition will be in June. The Communications Working Party are always happy to receive articles of 200 words maximum to consider as space is limited.

Thanks are due to my Communication Working Party colleagues Cllrs Adshead, May and Moore who form the editorial team and to our Designer, David Vinten, for his creative work. ■

YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Chairman: George Wood



Last year in the BYTC we focused on community safety, working with organisations to create a Youth Safety Booklet for young residents, aiming to allow all young people in Billericay to have access to crime prevention advice in an easier and more understandable format. This year we have continued to focus on community safety by working with other youth councils across Essex to develop an Essex wide safety booklet.

During January to February, we held an online safety survey to find out what crimes young citizens (aged 11-18) were most concerned about in Essex. With the help of Essex Youth Service we received a total of 93 responses and learnt that young people in the county of Essex are most concerned about knife crime, robbery/theft/burglary and drugs. These 3 main issues will be included in the new Essex Youth Safety Booklet which we are currently in the process of

designing. Advice concerning other crimes raised, will be covered on our Instagram page. To read the full survey report visit our website: www.sites.google.com/view/billericayyouthsafetyproject.

In November Youth Town Cllr George suggested to the youth council that we could hold a Christmas themed trail in the High Street. Members agreed that this would be an excellent opportunity for primary school children and their families to participate in a Christmas themed activity. Youth Councillors visited shops and restaurants along the High Street to ask them to hide characters in their windows. Children were kept busy finding a total of 24 characters. From the correct entries, a winner was picked at random and Youth Town Cllrs met the winner at the library to deliver their prize.

In 2025, we wrote a letter to King Charles and received a response back. His Majesty thanked us for our commitment to volunteering and helping young residents in our town.

Youth Town Councillors will be volunteering



at the Soap Box Derby, participating in the Sun Corner VE Day celebration and running a safety stall at Summerfest 2025. ■

CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS OF COMMUNITY AT THE CHANTRY CENTRE!

This May marks four years since The Chantry Centre first opened its doors. In mid-May 2021 we held the Annual Town Council meeting, and welcomed our very first commercial booking – and since then, we've gone from strength to strength. At the heart of everything we do lie two core aims:

1. To offer affordable facilities for community groups.
2. To generate income through commercial hire, helping to subsidise costs and keep the centre thriving.

2024/25 Highlights: Community + Commercial

- 58 community groups took advantage of the facilities offered by the Centre
- 56% of the hours booked this year were by community groups.
- 74% of total revenue, however, came from commercial bookings – helping to sustain and expand our offerings.
- Notably, 17% of all bookings were for local clubs and community groups holding regular meetings, a figure that's steadily increasing.

Wellness, Support & Social Connection

We're proud to host a wide range of activities, with a strong focus on wellbeing and community support:

- 644 hours were dedicated to Health, Wellbeing, and Fitness – including seated Pilates, yoga, Tai Chi, and post-natal classes.
- Social support plays a key role at the Centre, with groups like Billericay Men's Group, Hearing Help Essex, Gone Too Soon bereavement group and the Billericay Good Companions Club who offer bi-monthly get-togethers for seniors with conversation, entertainment, and a cuppa.
- And many other groups including book clubs, the Brownies, and the Barclays Banking Hub!

Commercial Success

Our commercial and retail bookings have proven vital in generating financial support:

- Corporate groups have used our spaces for training and team away days.

- Regular events like Héríté's Saturday retail pop-ups provide locals with a dose of weekend retail therapy.

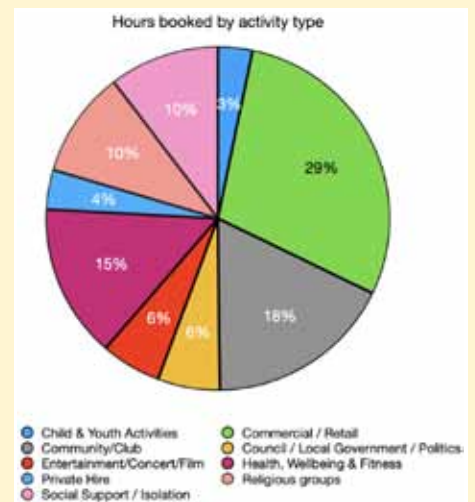
Fascinating Fact!

Did you know? The heaviest pane of glass in the building is located at the top of the stairwell on the right. It weighs a massive 225 kg – that's about the weight of a medium-sized tiger!

Thinking of Starting a Group?

Starting a community group is a fantastic way to give back – and we're here to help. We offer £100 in free room hire grants for new groups, equivalent to ten 1-hour sessions in one of our meeting rooms.

Get in touch with our Bookings Officer at 01277 625732 to learn more. ■



COUNCILLORS ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS 24 MAY 2024 – 25 April 2025

COUNCILLOR	PLANNING	FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES	HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT	COUNCIL	TOTAL
Cllr A Adshead		7	6	8	21
Cllr P Bunyan			5	6	11
Cllr C E Butler*				1	1
Cllr R Clark	20	3		9	32
Cllr E Davies	23		6	9	38
Cllr M Dear	14	4	5	8	31
Cllr J Devlin	12			7	19
Cllr J Henshaw	12			4	16
Cllr K Herlock			5	6	11
Cllr B Lammin*				1	1
Cllr C May	19		6	8	33
Cllr M Moore	23	5	8	9	45
Cllr K Mordecai	15	4	7	8	34
Cllr G St.Pierre		3		6	9
Cllr I Scott		2		7	9
Cllr H Stuart	2			7	9
Cllr G Talbot		5	5	5	15
Cllr A Talboys	18	6		8	32
Cllr M Thomas		4	7	8	19
Cllr J Tutton	19	5	8	8	40

*joined Town Council March 2025