

**MINUTES OF THE 2025 BILLERICAY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CHANTRY CENTRE, CHANTRY WAY, BILLERICAY  
ON THURSDAY 24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2025 @ 7.00P.M.**

**In the Chair:** Cllr J Devlin, Vice-Chairman Billericay Town Council

**Present:** Thirteen Town Councillors  
Borough & County Cllr Dr R Moore  
One member of the public

**Apologies** Cllr M Thomas, Chairman Billericay Town Council

**1/25 Welcome by Town Council Vice-Chairman**

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the twenty fifth Billericay Annual Town Meeting. He stated that the purpose of the Annual Town Meeting is to give residents the opportunity to ask questions of the Town Council as this is an open forum.

**2/25 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were summarised by Cllr Devlin, then taken as read and approved as a correct record. No questions were raised and there were no matters arising.

**3/25 Question and Answer Session**

**Q.** What's happening with the May elections?

**A.** With the agreement of central Government the May 2025 elections have been postponed. This is due to the mayoral re-organisation taking place in 2026 when a Greater Essex mayor will be elected. The consultation has finished and a decision from Government is expected shortly. The Mayor's strategic board will comprise 3 representatives from Essex county, 2 from Southend and 2 from Thurrock. 80% of the population resides in the County area so it is felt unfair that they only have 3 votes and could be outvoted by the other two. This has been taken on board but it remains to be seen if the Government will do anything. Basildon has already applied for no elections in 2026 which is considered early and the elections for the new authorities will be held in 2027. It is unknown what exactly is happening with regard to geographical organisation for the new unitary authorities being formed – there may be 3, 4 or 5 unitaries.

**Q.** Is there a possibility that Billericay will break away from Basildon?

**A.** A Borough Councillor has started a petition on change.org to this effect. There is no reason for current districts to remain linked together but they have to want to make the change. There are three potential new districts – south, mid and north Essex. South Essex may include everything south of the A127 and this would make Billericay part of mid Essex.

**Q.** Will local councils be affected?

**A.** When the unitaries come into existence they may no longer want certain assets and could devolve the responsibility to towns and parishes. Some Town councils around the country are

very large with many hundreds of staff and may be larger than the unitary authority. The Town Council has to agree to take over assets and responsibilities and can refuse.

**Q.** If Basildon combine with Thurrock will they be responsible for Thurrock's debt?

**A.** The current leader of Thurrock council is not keen to join with Basildon. He would prefer Brentwood and Harlow to Basildon. Borough Cllr Moore advised that the Thurrock debt is a huge deal in the local Government reorganisation. If the Government does not write the debt off then who would join with Thurrock? Currently, no one is sure how this will work out.

**Q.** What is the situation with regard to increased parking charges?

**A.** Nobody knows – least of all Basildon Borough Council. Local area committees are being asked to pay but no proper cost analysis has been done. Town Cllr Adshead said that the basic premise to justify a hike in charges is incorrect. It is a council resource that benefits the entire borough and their argument does not work. Borough Cllr Dr Moore said that the increased parking charges are all about the politics and nothing to do with residents.

**Q.** Are there any good activities coming up for VE Day?

**A.** On 8<sup>th</sup> May there is a beacon lighting event on Sun Corner from 8.30pm to 9.30pm. There is also a WWII Exhibition in the Chantry Centre on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May from 11am until 3pm.

#### **4/25 Chairman's Report and Summary of the Council Committee's year**

Cllr Devlin read Cllr Thomas's report detailing his year in office. Cllr Moore presented the Health, Wellbeing & Environment Committee Report, Cllr May the Planning Committee report and Cllr Adshead the Finance & General Purposes Committee report. The full reports will be available in the Town Council's annual report which will be published in May.

The Vice-Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.46pm.