



Billericay Town Council Annual Report 2019/2020

Billericay – A Great Place to Be

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019/20 Cllr. Jim Devlin



The past year has been one of the busiest years that Billericay Town Council has had in its history. At the end of our last municipal year the old Day Centre in Chantry Way was demolished; last summer building operations began on the new Town Hall which will take its place. Those of you that have passed the site will have seen the magnificent new Town Hall arise above the protective hoarding over the past few months and towards the end of the year the community will begin to benefit from the facilities that this building offers. I thank those councillors and staff for the work they have put in and the work yet to come.

Our Civic Service this year on the 8th of March was held at the Most Holy Redeemer church in Laindon Road and I am very grateful for the effort they put into holding this service for us in conjunction with Churches Together in Billericay, with a special mention to St Peter's School for their input. I spoke about our theme of tolerance

and how by being tolerant within our community we could not only build a better community but also bring that community together. Little did I know then what was just about to hit us and how important our local community was to become when a couple of weeks later the coronavirus arrived. The Town Council has tried to support where it can but we have limited staff resources and thus have restricted ourselves to making small cash grants to local voluntary groups to enable them to continue their work during the period of social distancing.

At the start of the municipal year, late last spring, I had great pleasure in presenting the Citizen of the Year Award to Jo Adshead, who has masterminded the Billericay Art Trail for a number of years. She has put her heart and soul into this fantastic event, almost to the point of exhaustion, and the work takes up a great part of her year. This event is a showcase for the artistic talent of Billericay and this award to Jo is not only for her work but also for the contribution that the Art Trail makes to the community life of the town.



Jo Adshead receiving her Citizen of the Year award from Cllrs Jim Devlin and Jo Clark

This was to be an election year for members of the Town Council but the Coronavirus Emergency put paid to that. The election has been postponed until May next year and all current Town Councillors will continue with the work they have been doing for another year. My thanks goes to them all and to our hard working staff for their input over the past year.

It only remains for me to wish everyone in Billericay well, stay safe and please heed Government advice during these difficult times to protect us all. ■

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 those services provided by other councils.

Billericay Town Council and local sponsors pay for the hanging baskets in Billericay High Street. These are a much-appreciated feature of our High Street during the summer months. The Town Council also provides and maintains the flowering plant displays in the planters around the High Street as well as funding the various plantings at the War Memorial throughout the year. The Town Council also cleans the War Memorial in readiness for the annual Remembrance Sunday Service in November.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Once again the Town Council's annual 'Celebration of Christmas Lights' was held on Sun Comer. Entertainment was provided by Billericay's local



schools, clubs and societies together with, of course, Father Christmas.

FESTIVAL GARDENS

Located in Crown Road, near the High Street, the Festival Gardens are an attractive small garden for the healthy enjoyment of local residents. Unfortunately the garden had become a magnet to a few young people who had been using the garden for drinking and drug use. The Town Council removed the hedging along Crown Road so that the garden was more open and garden visitors are more visible by local residents and passers by.

BILLERICAY IN BLOOM COMPETITION

The event in 2019 was very popular with over one hundred people attending the competition prize giving. We had a total of nine entry categories including the Best School

Garden, Best Front Garden, Best Commercial Premises and Best Wildlife Garden. Local infant and primary schools entered the categories 'Plant in a Recycled Container' and 'Herb Garden' with a total of fifty-five pupils entering these two categories – a record for this competition. The event was sponsored by a number of local businesses and local councillors. ■

COUNCILLORS ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

| COUNCILLOR | PLANNING | FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES | HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT | COUNCIL | TOTAL |
|--------------------|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Cllr A Adshead | | 11 | 7 | 5 | 23 |
| Cllr R Chapman | | | | 5 | 5 |
| Cllr J Clark | 18 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 41 |
| Cllr R Clark | 20 | 2 | | 7 | 29 |
| Cllr M Dear | 5 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 24 |
| Cllr J Devlin | 15 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 38 |
| Cllr C Dyer | | | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Cllr J Henshaw | 9 | | | 3 | 12 |
| Cllr K Herlock | | | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Cllr L Mitchelmore | 20 | | | 6 | 26 |
| Cllr M Moore | 18 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 39 |
| Cllr K Mordecai | | | | 7 | 7 |
| Cllr C Roberts | | 8 | 4 | 6 | 18 |
| Cllr M Roessler | | 11 | | 8 | 19 |
| Cllr D Spencer | 17 | | 7 | 7 | 31 |
| Cllr G Talbot | | 10 | | 7 | 17 |
| Cllr A Talboys | 20 | 8 | | 4 | 32 |
| Cllr M Thomas | | | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Cllr J Tutton | 16 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 34 |

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. Adam Adshead



The Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) oversee and scrutinise all of the Council's financial activities ensuring that they comply with Financial Regulations and that the Council continues to operate within its budget. It also has responsibility for those activities which don't naturally fall within the remit of our Environment or Planning Committees which includes the construction of the new Town Hall community building. F&GP reviews and agrees the budgets for the various initiatives proposed; sets the Precept (the portion of your Council Tax that funds those Town Council activities) and it provides supervision of the Council's assets.

For the coming year we have raised the Precept by 3.14% to cover increased costs. A typical Band D property will now pay £23.67 per year – an increase of 72 pence. Of over 8,800 smaller town and parish councils, Billericay's precept remains within the lowest 20%.

TOWN HALL DEVELOPMENT

Most of the work of the Committee this year has

been focussed on the construction of the new building, the current status of which is covered elsewhere. It will become the new home for the Town Council, saving us the costs of leasing Crown Yard and the Loft. But more importantly it will provide a wonderful centrally located space for community groups to use with its 162 seat hall, equipped kitchen and 3 meeting rooms. We look forward to welcoming both regular users of the old Day Centre back and new users from Billericay's wealth of community groups and charities in addition to generating revenue from private and commercial hire.

Whilst the opening will inevitably be delayed by the Coronavirus epidemic the Committee continued to work on all the supporting infrastructure (hire charges, terms and conditions etc.) as well as planning for the move from our current premises.

GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

A small grant budget is available to be awarded to local community and charitable groups providing services to the town. This year it included £250 to the Cater Museum to fund storage boxes, £100 to

the Essex Herts Air Ambulance and £500 to the Schools Pastors for uniforms.

With the onset of the Coronavirus epidemic towards the end of the financial year we made available Emergency Grants of up to £100 to support community groups helping residents in Billericay. These have included:

- £100 for the Forget me Not Memory Cafe who are providing weekly activity packs to counter the effects of isolation
- £100 to Basis South Essex to provide a telephone befriending service to reduce feel-ings of isolation and loneliness across 172 visually impaired members living in Billericay.
- In addition we loaned our hi-vis jackets to the Billericay Foodbank as they enhance their service to provide deliveries during this time. ■

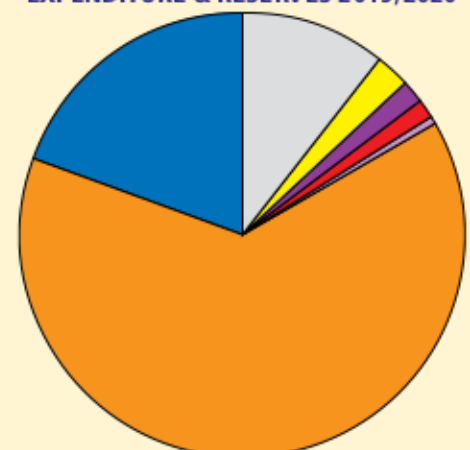
EXPENDITURE AND RESERVES

| 2018/19 | EXPENDITURE | 2019/20 |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| £'000 | DESCRIPTION | £'000 |
| 129 | Administration & Council Members | 140 |
| 14 | Recreational Facilities | 31 |
| 20 | Public Toilets | 20 |
| 19 | Christmas Lights | 19 |
| 1 | Other Projects | 0 |
| 9 | Publications | 9 |
| 0 | Election | 0 |
| 118 | Chantry Way Centre | 828 |
| 1 | Youth Town Council | 0 |
| 4 | Earmarked Reserves – Building Fd | 250 |
| 0 | To General Reserve | 0 |
| 315 | Total | 1297 |

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

| 2018/19 | INCOME | 2019/20 |
|------------|------------------------|-------------|
| £'000 | SOURCE | £'000 |
| 275 | Precept | 282 |
| 4 | Interest Earned | 4 |
| 5 | Local sponsorship | 3 |
| 10 | Outside Funding | 0 |
| 16 | From General Reserve | 7 |
| 4 | From Earmarked Reserve | 0 |
| 0 | Chantry Way Centre | 0 |
| 1 | Premises Letting | 1 |
| 0 | PWLB | 1,000 |
| 315 | Total | 1297 |

EXPENDITURE & RESERVES 2019/2020



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

PLANNING COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. Lesley Michelmore



This year the Planning Committee considered 294 planning and 7 licensing applications bringing a local perspective within the framework of National and Local Planning Policy including the Billericay Design Guide and Conservation Area. No objections were made to 195 planning applications although 18 were subsequently refused by Basildon Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority). Of the 70 to which the committee objected, 50 were granted permission – although some of those applications would have been amended prior to permission being granted.

The Council is supportive of planning applications that comply with National and Local Planning Policy and are sympathetic to and enhance the host building and character of the surrounding area, without impacting negatively on the amenity of neighbouring properties. This is particularly important in the Conservation Area along the High Street to preserve the historic character and setting of the many listed buildings as required in National and Local Planning Policy.

The restoration of Elizabeth Cottage and the Costa Coffee building this year are good examples of this.

Meetings of the Planning Committee are held in public and residents are very welcome to attend. If they wish they can address the committee on matters listed on the agenda. To ensure that there is enough seating, it is helpful if residents inform the Town Clerk if they plan to attend.

The Committee also considered 7 Consultations and members attended two community engagement events regarding the Development Proposals for Land South West of Billericay which has been allocated for housing in the Pre-submission Basildon Borough Local Plan. Within the Local Plan developers for the sites are required to produce a master plan to demonstrate that they are deliverable and will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the allocated housing.

In addition, members attended a briefing on strengthening police powers to manage unauthorised encampments. The committee subsequently commented on a consultation regarding the police powers related to unauthorised encampments. ■

TOWN CRIER & ANNUAL REPORT Editor: Cllr. Marie Dear



Published at intervals throughout the year the Town Crier gives the latest news on our activities and initiatives. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic this edition is online only. Articles over the last

twelve months such as the new Special Constable, War Memorial Refurbishment and Town Hall development progress seek to provide residents with an appreciation of the the work of the Council.

Additionally, articles cover the activities of local organisations, clubs, features and events.

We are never short of material as there is so many community minded volunteers in Billericay. Articles from residents of no more than 200 words in length are welcomed for consideration.

THE ANNUAL REPORT provides a deeper analysis of the Town Council's projects and activities.

Sadly our proof reader, Frank Tomlin, has passed away. Frank's meticulous scrutiny of contributions will be missed. Thanks are due to our graphic designer, David Vinten, for his work on our publications. ■