



Billerica Town Council Annual Report 2022/2023

Billerica – A Great Place to Be

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2022/23 Cllr. J Clark



It hardly seems possible that a year has gone by since I took over as Chairman, having served as Vice Chairman for the previous nine years. During this past year history has been made on more than one occasion. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh had died the previous year on April 9th 2021 having been the longest serving Royal Consort in history. Last February 2022 Queen Elizabeth II celebrated the 70th Anniversary of her Accession to the throne. However as this day also marked 70 years since the death of her beloved father King George VI, it was not an occasion the Queen wished to celebrate so it was decided to hold celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee during the first week of June. Billerica of course joined in by lighting the Beacon on Sun Corner along with an estimated 3,500 Jubilee

Beacons across the UK., The Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and Overseas Territories around the World. At Sun Corner a programme of events brought the Town together along with festivities and street parties throughout the weekend. Billerica knows how to party.

Sadly just 3 months later on September 8th 2022 our Queen of 70 years died at the age of 96 years. For so many of us we could not remember a time when the Queen was not our Monarch. Billerica Town Council responded immediately and opened a Book of Remembrance the following day at the Chantry Centre for residents to convey their sympathies and their recollections. So many just wanted to talk about how they felt.

Our new community building, the Chantry Centre, came into its own at this time and for many it was the first time they had seen inside. I am pleased to say that people have been very

impressed, not only by the appearance but also the facilities. The Centre has continued to expand its use of the rooms and the variety of activities which take place there and as a result of the increased workload we have now employed two new part time workers, one looking after the bookings, the other as caretaker helping to look after the building.

We have new lampposts in the High Street which we believe are far more sympathetic to our historic town. As a result we are now in the process of looking at different ways to decorate our town for the forthcoming Christmas.

The Coronation of King Charles III on May 6th heralded a whole new era. To bring about the festive spirit and set the mood the Council had the High Street decorated in red, white and blue. At street parties and private parties residents enjoyed a wonderful holiday weekend. ■

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. M Mordecai



With increasing costs, it was necessary this year to increase the Precept for 2023/24 by 4%. The annual cost for a typical Band D household will be £25.74 a year (£24.75 2022/23) – about £2.15 per month – this small increase still ensures that Billerica remains one of the lowest charging Parish/Town Councils.

During the year were delighted to make a donation of £100 to Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

Following the move to the Chantry Centre it soon became clear that the one full-time and one part-time member of Staff were getting distracted from their core roles by having to actually run the Chantry Centre. It was therefore necessary to recruit another part-time member of the Administration Team, along with a part-time Caretaker, which now allows the Town Clerk and Committee Clerk to concentrate on their roles in full.

In moving to the new building, we continue our high level objectives which are two-fold:

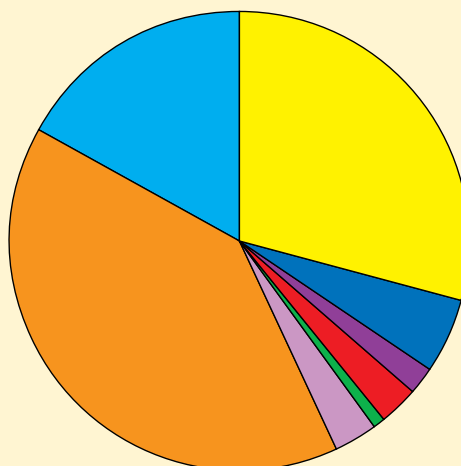
- **Social:** to provide facilities for community groups to use at an affordable cost. This year, there were 2,822 hours of activities for community/not-for-profit groups based in Billerica, and 4520 hours of Commercial, which does include the Barclays Banking Hub, that has proved a success for the Community.
- **Financial:** to generate income from commercial hirings to subsidise costs. Almost 75% of the revenue has come from commercial organisations. On closing the financial accounts for 2022/23 we, subject to Audit, expect to have

generated over £72,000 (£40,000 2021/22) in revenue.

Cost control plays an important part of F&GP's activities and we had fixed our gas and electric contract until 2025 for electric and 2027 for gas. This has been especially important in the current climate of price rises.

I would like to thank all members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the work that they have put in, in ensuring we give 'best value' to the Community. ■

EXPENDITURE & RESERVES 2022/2023



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

EXPENDITURE AND RESERVES

2021/22	EXPENDITURE	2022/23
£'000	DESCRIPTION	£'000
91	Administration & Council Members	113
18	Recreational Facilities	20
18	Public Toilets	8
10	Christmas Lights	10
0	Other Projects	4
5	Publications	11
16	Election	0
193	Chantry Way Centre	154
0	Youth Town Council	0
114	Earmarked Reserves	65
465	Total	385

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2021/22	INCOME	2022/23
£'000	SOURCE	£'000
300	Precept	303
0	Interest Earned	0
0.5	Local sponsorship	0
1.5	Outside Funding	9
6	General Reserve	0
0	Earmarked Reserve	0
38	Chantry Way Centre	73
119	PWLB	0
465	Total	385

HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. M 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 other councils.

We are responsible for providing all the floral displays in the High Street, including the planters and flower beds at the War Memorial, during both summer and winter. Unfortunately we had to remove the hanging baskets last summer as they were being damaged by trucks delivering to the shops so became a health and safety hazard to both pedestrians and motorists. Basildon Borough

Council are in the process of replacing the High Street lamp columns and we will look at new flower baskets next year. We also maintain two small gardens in the town – the Festival Gardens located in Crown Road and the Jim Shield Garden at the junction of the High Street and Western Road.

We've listened to residents' concerns about litter, so we've replaced five bins – two at the train station, one just before the roundabout in Stock Road, one in Queens Park and one at the junction of Lake Avenue and Stock Road. We are also reinstating the annual High Street litter pick and this year it was a clean up for the Coronation.

There is still a knock-on effect to the work of

the Committee following the Covid-19 pandemic and the move to the Chantry Centre. As a result we have decided that the Town Council will no longer run Billericay in Bloom, but it is hoped that one of the service organisations within the town will take over and revitalise the competition. We will continue to provide Christmas lights in the High Street as well as an illuminated Christmas Tree outside the Chantry Centre, and a brand new lighting scheme is planned for Christmas 2023.

We also have a very active independent tree warden group that reports to the Committee and are valued eyes and ears where the trees of the town are concerned. ■

PLANNING COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. J Tutton



Over the past year the Planning Committee have reviewed 297 applications. Of these, this committee and Basildon Borough Council (BBC), have agreed the determination on 182 of them.

The other 115 applications show that we objected to 32 but BBC Planning granted them and 31 show that we had no objection but BBC refused them. However, of these 31, 8 were subsequently amended and resubmitted, they were then granted by BBC. The figures do not totally add up because the remaining 52 have not been determined yet by BBC. Our approximate agreement rate with the BBC is near 80%

The common objections for the refused applications have been:-

- Over development of the site
- Excessive height/bulk
- Detrimental to neighbouring properties/out of keeping with the street scene
- Habitable room on the boundary

In the same time frame there were 14 planning appeals submitted by applicants who were not happy with the decisions of the Councils, none of these have been determined yet.

There have been a few larger development applications for us to consider:

- 66 Laindon Road (Ex Reids), which had been designed in conjunction with the Basildon Planning team, so it was well designed and laid out.
- Land north of Kennel Lane, requesting outline planning permission for 200 dwellings
- Off Potash Road – 150 dwellings and a 50 bed care home
- Care Home off Stock Road on the current site of G J Staines

The first one of these the Committee approved, the last three we objected to.

We have considered 4 licensing applications, all of which were granted.

Members of the Committee have also been involved in other initiatives or training during this period:

- Essex Highways User Survey
- The Boundary Review 2023 – the proposed changes to local boundaries
- Basildon Council Housing Strategy Stakeholder Event – which dealt mainly with the current social housing stock situation, changes that are in place or about to happen to improve the dwellings and the areas that they are in. Surprisingly there was no mention of social housing requirements for the Local Plan.
- Basildon Council Local Plan Focus Group – there has only been one meeting so far, at which the group leaders outlined the thoughts behind having this focus group and how it could operate. It was left for attendees to think about how they think it could be developed and how they could be involved, ready for a follow up meeting.

• Planning Enforcement Training
The Planning Committee Meetings are every 2 weeks on a Tuesday at 7:00pm, in the Chantry Centre. All meetings are open to the public. ■

BYTC Chairman: Freya Ramsay

Here at the Youth Town Council, we have done our part in our community over the last year as a group dedicated to our community. We have visited our local food bank in which we organised food and received a talk from the kind volunteers who offer their time there. We have had discussions with Basildon Creative People and Places about arranging events in Billericay dedicated to our youth and creative interests. We are currently also working toward a Youth Café for those who need an area to either relax or study in after school. The council has worked incredibly hard this year in playing a part in improving the livelihood of not just the youth but everyone in Billericay. ■



Youth Town Councillors at Billericay Foodbank

COUNCILLORS ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS 3 MAY 2022 – 23 MARCH 2023

COUNCILLOR	PLANNING (22)	FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES (6)	HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT (9)	COUNCIL (10)	TOTAL
Cllr A Adshead		5		4	9
Cllr J Clark	13	5	5	6	29
Cllr L Clark			6	4	10
BCllr R Clark	21	4		6	31
Cllr M Dear	5	4	2	3	14
Cllr J Devlin	17			6	23
Cllr J Henshaw	8			2	10
Cllr C May	1	1		4	6
Cllr M Moore	21	6	6	6	39
Cllr K Mordecai	18		6	7	31
Cllr M Mordecai		6	6	6	18
Cllr M Roessler		4		4	8
Cllr E Sainsbury			4	4	8
Cllr C Smith				5	5
Cllr D Spencer	18		4	5	27
Cllr G Talbot		4	1	7	12
Cllr A Talboys	22	3		7	32
Cllr M Thomas	6	5	5	6	22
Cllr J Tutton	18	4	5	4	31
Cllr K Herlock				1	1