



Billericay Town Council Annual Report 2012/2013

YOUR QUALITY COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012-13

Cllr. John Buchanan

Democracy was in action last May when 25 candidates stood for election to the 20 seats on the Town Council, the first time for 15 years when all the seats on the Council had been contested. This gives your Town Council a real mandate to represent you and work on your behalf. I was honoured to be elected by the Councillors to continue as the Chairman as we settled down to work. Because of this democratic mandate, we have been able to adopt the Power of General Competence, available under the Localism Act, which means that the Council can now do anything which it is legal for an ordinary person to do. Without this Power, we were limited to doing only those things which were specifically allowed by various other Acts of Parliament. We were the first Town Council in Essex to adopt the Power. Six of the Councillors elected in May were new to the Town Council, and it has been good to see most of them getting involved in the Committees and Working Parties which actually do the detailed work of the Council.

I hope you enjoy reading the reports by the Chairmen of those Committees and Working Parties, describing what each of them has been doing this last year.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Chairman
Cllr. Jim Devlin

The Finance & General Purposes Committee has a role similar to that of a Financial Director in a company. It is the committee's responsibility to scrutinize the financial performance of the Council and to ensure that the Council remains within budgetary constraints and obtains best value for the community.

We are pleased to be able to say that for the third year running the Council has been able to maintain the precept at the same level. As you know the precept is collected by Basildon Council within their Council Tax demand and the Billericay Town proportion will be £19.80 on a Band D property and slightly higher or lower for other bands.

Despite having a zero percent change to our precept we will not be reducing any services or investments we make. Billericay Town Council will continue to be able to fund Christmas Lights, Billericay in Bloom, Play Areas and our many other projects.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee oversees a number of Working Parties.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

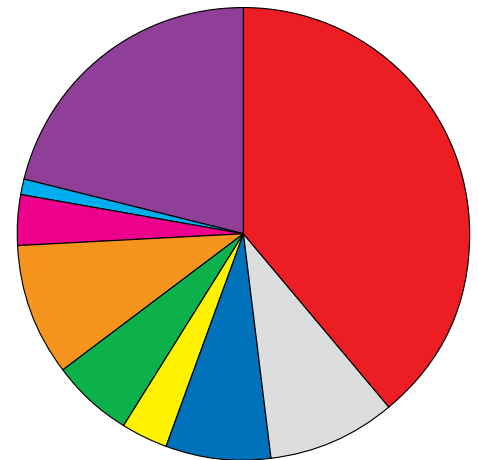
2011/12	INCOME	2012/13
£'000	SOURCE	£'000
246	Precept	246
5	Interest earned	7
2	Local sponsorship	2
6	Outside funding	12
0	From General Reserve	0
259	Total	267

EXPENDITURE AND RESERVES

2011/12	EXPENDITURE	2012/13
£'000	DESCRIPTION	£'000
91	Administration & Council Members	99
46	Recreational Facilities	23
19	Public Toilets	19
7	Christmas Lights	8
10	Other Projects	24
20	Publications	10
0	Election	15
1	Youth Town Council	2
55	Earmarked Reserves*	53
10	To General Reserve	14
259	Total	267

*Earmarked Reserves are for Christmas Lights £5,000, Allotments £10,000, Planning £8,000 and Building Fund £30,000.

EXPENDITURE AND RESERVES 2012/2013



- Administration & Council Members
- Recreational Facilities
- Other Projects
- Public Toilets
- Publications
- Christmas Lights
- Youth Town Council
- Election Expenses
- Earmarked Reserves

Town Crier Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Marion Wilson

We have continued to produce the Town Crier quarterly for free delivery to all who live in the Billericay Town area, mostly 6 page editions this year. This is mainly due to the increase in the Community News section which affords local groups a chance to advertise forthcoming events or tell us about a special anniversary or activity they have held as well as the large number of activities undertaken by the Town Council. We constantly try to deal with any problems of delivery reported to us.

We were Highly Commended this year by the Essex Association for Local Councils for our newsletter.

Assets Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Jim Devlin

This Working Party is responsible for the Council's property assets and during the year The Festival Gardens was transferred to the Town Council by Basildon Council. The transfer of the Jim Shields Garden at the junction of the High Street and Western Road from Essex County Council to Billericay Town Council is currently in the legal stages and should be



completed shortly. The two transfers so far are part of the Localism Agenda and have

been made without any need to increase our charges to the community.

Town Guide Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Marion Wilson

The Town Guide was not produced during 2012, but the group has already started work on the 2014 edition which will be published at the end of this year.



For further information and general enquiries contact:
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T: 01277 625732 • F: 01277 634784 • E: townclerk@billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk

W: www.billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk

Official Office Opening times 9.30am - 2.30pm Mon-Fri.

Outside these hours please ring as there may well be office staff present.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. Jules Bottazzi

The job of the Environment Committee is, of course, to enhance Billericay's environment – and we do this either by providing extra services, or complementing existing services provided by Basildon Council or Essex County Council.

For example, we provide the Christmas lights for the High Street. Meanwhile, Basildon collects our litter and provides recycling services... but we provide extra "litter picks" several times a year in areas we've noticed need an extra tidy-up. We also organise the stunning hanging baskets in the High Street, maintain the war memorial, hold Billericay In Bloom competition every year for our Alan Titchmarsh wannabes, maintain some of the town's bus shelters, provide a public toilet, and installed a beacon at Sun Corner as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

We do an awful lot of work with the parks too; we're very lucky to have some beautiful green spaces in Billericay. The Town Council is now responsible for The Festival Gardens – a lovely little gem of a park hidden away behind Crown Road and considered by many to be our best-kept secret! It's a little oasis of tranquility – why not stop there for a break next time you're shopping? Lake Meadows is, of course, maintained by Basildon Council but we've provided the skatepark and MUSA (that's a Multi-Use Sports Area to you and I). This past year, we've helped to set up a Friends Of Lake Meadows group – a group of local residents who speak directly to Basildon and ourselves about what they want to see improved at the park. We're currently consulting with residents about what sort of facilities they would like to see at Outwood Common. And, of course, we have ensured that Sun Corner will stay Sun Corner for evermore; we'll always have that lovely green space at the top of our High Street.

The Town Council organised four guided Town Trail Walks which were all well attended.

The Chairmen of our various Working Parties tell you more about what we've done this year.

Recreation Facilities Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Peter Bowditch



The Festival Gardens

The Town Council has taken over The Festival Gardens from Basildon Borough Council and has set about renovating the whole area and we have received compliments from the public on how it now looks – we still have a lot to do.

In Lake Meadows we continue to have a very good relationship with the Borough Council and together we have made improvements, especially



The Friends of Lake Meadows

with the path renovations – there will be further joint programmes for next year. Together we established a Friends of Lake Meadows Group to complement what we are doing and this is now well established with a work programme for the coming year. An Essex Legacy Celebrations event took place in July in the Teen Play area which saw many young people demonstrating their skills, especially on the skateboard facility.

We are working with the residents and young people at Outwood Common to establish a new children's play area on the Green – this is progressing very well.

Litter Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Robert Chapman



Cllrs Buchanan and Chapman with some of the bags of rubbish collected in the Litter Pick

The litter group has had another successful year with three litter picks including our first ever in Outwood Common. Each litter pick has managed to find large collections of rubbish. We continue to monitor the litter requirements in the town and we installed two new litter bins and, for the first time the Council has installed dog waste bins.

Billericay in Bloom Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Pam Went



Billericay in Bloom – Best Wildlife Garden

Despite the adverse weather conditions the 15th Anniversary of the Billericay in Bloom competition was a great success with 72 entries. As always the judges were very impressed with the high standard of entries ranging from Best Garden in a container, for those at Junior School, right through to Best Sheltered Accommodation garden. Two new categories were included – Best Wildlife Garden and Best Domestic Greenhouse. The prizegiving event held in the Emmanuel Archer Hall was well attended

by the entrants, their families plus the sponsors and, as on previous occasions, we were lucky enough to have BBC Essex Radio presenter Ken Crowther in attendance to present the prizes. Mr John Smart's entry in the Best Wildlife Garden category was voted best in show.

It is very much hoped that the 2013 competition is just as successful and we are very grateful for the continued support of the many sponsors.

Christmas Lights Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Jo Clark



Crowds gather for the Celebration of Christmas Lights

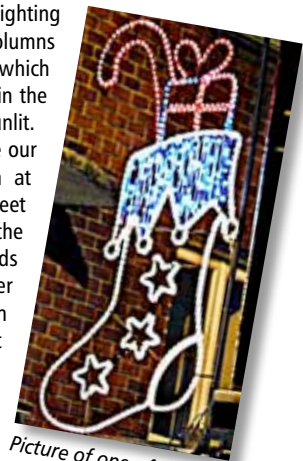
The Town Council continued for the 8th year to organise and provide Christmas Lights for the High Street through the Christmas Lights Working Party.

This is not as simple a task as illuminating one's own home as structural tests have to be undertaken on lamp columns to ensure that they are strong enough to support the lighting displays. Some lamp columns do not pass the test which is why there are gaps in the High Street which are unlit.

We were able to utilise our newly erected beacon at one end of the High Street and also illuminate the tree in the Jim Shields Garden at the other end. None of this can be achieved without sufficient funding and as we did not receive a grant from Basildon Council we were reliant on Town Council support and that of the local businesses and clubs for which we are grateful.

The 'Switch On' took place on November 24th with the Salvation Army Band, Mayflower School Choir and the Youth Town Council members who were dressed in costumes and handed out balloons. Father Christmas, supported by the Billericay Lions Club, switched on the lights and distributed sweets to the children.

The Best Dressed Window Competition was won by the Olive Branch who donated their £100 prize to St



Picture of one of the lamp column motifs



Presentation of the cheque at the Olive Branch

New Bench installed in The Festival Gardens

Luke's Hospice. Highly Commended Certificates were also distributed to other premises who it was felt also provided attractive displays. None of this could be achieved without the help and support received from our sponsors and Billericay residents, so thank you one and all.

Sun Corner Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Moira Moore



Essex County Cllr. Kay Twitchen and Lord Petre, Lord Lieutenant of Essex plant a small oak

A dedication ceremony took place in November 2012 to celebrate Sun Corner being granted Queen Elizabeth II status. The status follows a joint campaign by the Town Council, Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council. The



Queen Elizabeth II Field plaque

ceremony included the unveiling of a plaque and the planting of a small oak tree by Lord Petre, Lord Lieutenant of Essex.

The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge was launched to safeguard hundreds of outdoor recreational spaces for future generations in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee as a permanent tribute to Queen Elizabeth II.

Sun Corner is an important and well-used amenity for local people and provides an important green oasis within the central part of Billericay. It has been used by local residents for



sports and recreation pastimes for many years.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Peter Bowditch



Town Councillors Jim Devlin, John Buchanan and Peter Bowditch with the Town Crier, Jim Shrubbs

The Town Council, in liaison with Basildon Council, erected a Beacon on Sun Corner, one of many beacons across the country that were lit on the 4th June to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. There were around 500 residents in attendance to join in the singalong with musicians, choirs, a celebrity and dignitaries all assembled there to celebrate the beacon lighting.

PLANNING COMMITTEE Chairman: Cllr. Ian Davie

By law Basildon Council has to consult with the Town Council about all planning applications concerning the town. Consideration of these applications includes related highway matters such as parking, increased traffic and safety considerations. The Planning Committee meets every two weeks in order to examine applications within the required time frame and this year reviewed some 280 plans, raising objections to about a third. Not all of its recommendations were supported by Basildon Council, perhaps because the Town Council is a little more zealous in attempting to preserve the character of Billericay. This particularly applies to proposals affecting the High Street Conservation Area and any developments in the Green Belt. There is little scope for significant development within the town so most applications are for conversions and extensions; occasionally a property with a large garden will be demolished to allow several new dwellings to be built.

The Committee responds to local and national consultations involving planning regulations and guidelines. Examples in the past year include Government proposals to relax the need for planning permission for large rear extensions, permitting existing commercial and industrial buildings to be used for other purposes, and simplifying the procedure to re-designate public rights of way. The Town Council also has a limited role in assessing Licensing applications.

The Planning Committee is responsible for three Working Parties or Project Groups:

- Town Trail, Rides & Walks
- Salt / Grit Provision
- Street Signs & Highway Furniture

Salt Bags and Bins Working Party – Chairman: Cllr. Ian Davie



For several years, at the beginning of winter, the Town Council has assisted residents by distributing salt grit free of charge for use on stretches of road which are particularly troublesome in icy weather. The salt is provided by Essex County Council and is intended for public highways and footpaths only; altogether two tonnes were available for priority areas. This supplements the wayside salt bins in the town which are checked by the Council for salt content and serviceability, in order to produce a status report for the County Council.

Street Signs and Highway Furniture Project Team – Chairman: Cllr. Rod Rapley

The project team was established to determine whether any changes or additions to signage were

required. A survey was undertaken which identified every post, bollard, sign, litter bin, bench and bus shelter in the High Street.

As a result of an analysis of these findings a further survey was made in conjunction with an officer from Essex County Council highways department. All signs relating to parking restrictions and controls were examined to see whether they could be reduced in number.

Essex County Council have removed several signs which were identified as surplus, improved the signage where it was unclear and combined signs from separate posts to single adjacent posts.

It was noticed that there were a series of signs relating to

- the use of CCTV,
- advertising the area as an alcohol free zone,
- warnings regarding litter dropping and
- the presence of a retail watch scheme.

The responsible authorities were contacted to find out whether the signs were still relevant.

The survey also identified new lampposts that had not been painted black to match the existing posts.

The project team will continue to monitor the signs and attention is also being paid to the proliferation of A boards which can appear outside retail premises in the High Street. It is appreciated that several of these premises have private forecourts upon which boards can be displayed but it is essential that the highway footpath is not obstructed for pedestrians particularly the disabled and those with sight problems and push chairs.

2012 was a year of events and over the past year the Billericay Youth Town Council have achieved many great things. In March 2012, we held a Bake Sale in aid of the local residential homes. In a couple of hours we raised £500 and with this money we purchased much needed gifts for Hill House Court Residential home. To celebrate this great success we held a jubilee inspired themed tea party at the residential home. In the Easter period, we embraced the chocolate

season and held an Easter Egg Hunt for under 8's in Lake Meadows. Again we had a lovely day and were so pleased to see so many children having fun. To honour the Olympics, the BYTC held the SX Urban Games in



COUNCILLORS ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS 10 MAY 2012 – 6 MARCH 2013

NO. OF MEETINGS	22	7	7	8		
COUNCILLOR	PLANNING	FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES	ENVIRONMENT	COUNCIL	WPs/PGs	TOTAL
Tina Arnold			1	3	1	5
John Bellringer	18			8	3	29
Jules Bottazzi			5	4	10	19
Peter Bowditch	16	7	6	7	24	60
Tony Bown	2			4	3	9
John Buchanan	16	7	6	8	36	73
Bob Chapman			6	8	8	22
Jo Clark	13		6	5	14	38
Ian Davie	21			6	11	38
Marie Dear		7		7	3	17
Jim Devlin	11	6		8	13	38
Colin Dyer		2	5	6	5	18
Susan McCaffery	20			7	12	39
Moirra Moore		4	6	7	11	28
Rod Rapley		6		6	7	19
Daphne Spencer	13		4	4	10	31
Trevor Stansfield		7		6	2	15
Pamela Went			7	7	11	25
Emma Willis				4	3	7
Marion Wilson		5	6	7	8	26

BILLERICAY TOWN COUNCILLORS

Name	Address	Phone No.	E-Mail	Ward
Tina Arnold	c/o Billericay Town Council	01277 625732	CllrTArnold@aol.com	E
John Bellringer	100 Church Street, Great Burstead CM11 2TS	01277 650118	johnbellringer100@hotmail.co.uk	SW
Jules Bottazzi	7 Montpellier Close, Billericay CM12 0UH	01277 653130	cllrjules@bottazzi.co.uk	W
Peter Bowditch	18 Cranmer Close, Billericay CM12 0YQ	01277 659530	peter.bowditch@tiscali.co.uk	W
Tony Bown	76 Western Road, Billericay CM12 9DT	01277 625732	ajb@jgrlaw.co.uk	E
John Buchanan	72 Meadow Rise, Billericay CM11 2EF	01277 656715	cldr.buchanan@tiscali.co.uk	E
Robert Chapman	99 Church Street, Billericay CM11 2TS	01277 657696	bob@chapman156.freeserve.co.uk	E
Jo Clark	33 Carson Road, Billericay CM11 1SA	01277 659842		E
Ian Davie	51 Tye Common Road, Billericay CM12 9NR	01277 656139	i.davie@talktalk.net	SW
Marie Dear	c/o Billericay Town Council	01277 625732	marie.dear@btinternet.com	W
Jim Devlin	231 Perry Street, Billericay CM12 0NZ	01277 656937	jim@devlin.plus.com	W
Colin Dyer	6 Montpellier Close, Billericay CM12 0UH	01277 625732		W
Susan McCaffery	25 The Rising, Billericay CM11 2HN	01277 625732	s_mccaffery@sky.com	E
Moirra Moore	47 Laindon Road, Billericay CM12 9LG	01277 627266	moira1moore@btinternet.com	SW
Rod Rapley	43 Crescent Road, Billericay CM12 0JQ	01277 622125	catral@fsmail.net	W
Daphne Spencer	Fir Tree Lodge, 16, Back Lane, Stock CM4 9DG	01277 829750	daphne.spencer1@googlemail.com	E
Trevor Stansfield	174 Perry Street, Billericay CM12 0NX	01277 623519	tremar@aol.com	W
Pamela Went	4 The Mullions, Billericay CM12 9XG	01277 658961	pam.went@tiscali.co.uk	W
Emma Willis	5 Bluebell Wood, Billericay CM12 0ES	01277 625732		W
Marion Wilson	25 Parklands, Billericay CM11 1AS	01277 626321		E
CHAIRMAN:	Cllr John Buchanan			
TOWN CLERK:	Helen Philpott Billericay Town Council The Loft, Crown Yard, High Street Billericay, Essex CM12 9BX	Telephone: Fax: E-Mail: Website:	01277 625732 01277 634784 townclerk@billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk www.billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk	

Lake Meadows, which consisted of street dance, basketball, freestyling and BMX competitions. It was a free event and had over 400 people attend. Because of its popularity we hope to hold the same event in 2013. Towards the end of the year, the council had its elections which brought the numbers to the highest it's ever been. With new representatives from St John's School and Anglo European High School, we are spreading our name through a variety of sources. To publicise ourselves further, we now have our own radio show on Phoenix FM on the first Monday of every month at 8pm. This has made our members more dedicated and brings a vibe to the council every time we meet as the shows are very amusing! During 2013 we aim to achieve greater things than last year and have more events planned than ever.

FACTS

The Town Council represents YOU and has a consultative role in relation to Basildon Borough Council, Essex County Council and other authorities responsible for police, water and health.

DID YOU KNOW

- ▶ the Town Council's Coach House meeting room in Crown Yard is available to hire at reasonable cost; a comfortably furnished room which can accommodate up to 40 people seated. For details of hire, contact the Town Clerk.
- ▶ the Annual Report can be made available in large print. To obtain a copy in alternative format please contact the Town Council.
- ▶ the Town Council has supplies of the Pink recycling sacks – free of charge, White Garden waste sacks – £1.80 per roll and Food waste sacks - £3.00 per roll.
- ▶ members of the public are welcome to attend Council and Committee meetings and are given the opportunity to ask questions – dates of meetings and agendas are available on the Council's website.
- ▶ copies of the Billericay Design Statement are also available from the Town Council office.

As well as the Town Guide and 'Healthy Shortcuts' leaflets, copies of the Town Council's Town Trail, Circular Walks and Leisure Cycle leaflets can be obtained from the Town Council office.
Look out for details regarding forthcoming Town Trail Walks