

# MUNDON PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 16 MAY 2023 AT 7PM IN THE VICTORY HALL

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**Present:** Cllr Gavin Rowsell, Cllr Kerry-Jane Wylie and Cllr Diane Leggett  
**In Attendance:** Mrs Jackie Lines – Parish Clerk/RFO  
District Cllr Tony Fittock  
**Members of the Public:** 4  
**Meeting Commenced:** 7pm

**1. Chairman’s welcome and to receive apologies of absence.**

Cllr Bennett offered apology – apology accepted, unanimous decision.

**2. Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

Following the Notice of an Uncontested Election on 4 May 2023, all elected councillors to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Forms signed by Cllr Rowsell, Cllr Wylie and Cllr Leggett in the presence of the Clerk. It was resolved that Cllr Bennett’s form may be signed at a later date prior to the next meeting - unanimous decision.

**3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Nominations had been received by the Clerk proposing Cllr Rowsell continue in the role of Chairman and Cllr Wylie in the role of Vice Chair – unanimous decision. Individual Declarations of Acceptance of Office were signed by Cllr Rowsell and Cllr Wylie.

**4. Election of Representatives**

- a) Finance **(Cllr Rowsell to cover in the absence of a new member or existing member taking on the role)**
- b) Risk Assessment – **(All Councillors and Clerk)**
- c) Health & Safety – **(All Councillors and Clerk)**
- d) Wood Wardens – **(Les Potts and Steve Wells)**
- e) Neighbourhood Watch/Police/Village Information – **(Cllr Wylie)**
- f) Local Transport – **(Cllr Bennett – confirmation deferred to next meeting)**
- g) Plume Educational Trust – **(Cllr Wylie)**
- h) Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils – **(Cllr Rowsell, Cllr Wylie and Clerk)**
- i) Village Hall – **(Marita Ponting)**
- j) Community Events – **(All Councillors)**
- k) Village/Parish Council Website – **(Cllr Rowsell)**
- l) Sea Defences/Airports – **(Cllr Rowsell)**
- m) Planning – **(All Councillors)**
- n) Highways & PROW (Public Rights of Way) – **(All Councillors)**

**5. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Rowsell reminded members it is their responsibility to check that their Register of interest are up to date or if new to register at MDC i.e. if any changes occur that they are updated within 28 days on the MDC website.

Cllr Leggett declared an interest relating to agenda item 19 – Parish Council Land – Ownership and Boundaries.

**6. Public Forum**

A resident reported tractors towing trailers travelling through the village seemed to be overloaded and they were therefore spilling a lot of mud debris over the roads. During the recent heavy rains it had been a particular problem. Names of haulage companies to be provided to the Parish Council if the problem continues.

Owners of the land adjacent to Willow Grove had provided an update via email regarding the new outline planning application for up to two dwellings which had been submitted to and validated by Maldon District Council.

**7. Minutes of the previous meeting – 21 March 2023**

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21 March 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record – unanimous decision.

**8. Review Frequency of Parish Council Meetings and Future Meeting Dates**

- a) Meetings to continue bi-monthly – unanimous decision.
- b) The meeting dates were set for July 23 to May 24, information to be displayed on the website and noticeboard – unanimous decision.

**9. Councillors**

Councillor vacancy by co-option to be advertised on the website, noticeboard and social media.

**10. County/District Councillors Report**

County Cllr Wendy Stamp had provided an ECC annual report for the Southminster Division dated 21 April 2023 (Appendix A on the website).

**11. Policies, Procedures, Risk Assessments and Contracts**

To consider and resolve any annual or new drafts:

Code of Conduct for Members - It was resolved to adopt the same version as adopted by Maldon District Council in July 2022 – unanimous decision.

**12. Transport**

Cllr Bennett was absent from the meeting, report to be provided for next meeting.

**13. The Furze**

To receive an update on The Furze - the Wood Warden reported the tree hunting platform built by others had been dismantled and no further structures had arisen.

Footpaths had been maintained throughout the year along with the clearing of fallen trees and debris.

The Wood Warden made a request to access The Furze with the wood chipper via the drier side perhaps via an additional gate. This was agreed via hinging an existing section of fence alongside the gate at the back of the car-park, a further gate was not felt to be required.

The Clerk reported a recent request from the Chair of the Heybridge and Maldon Climate Action Partnership to hold a walk at the Mundon Furze during the Climate Coalitions Big Green week being 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The event will be a mixture of information on folklore,

natural history and wellbeing. This had been agreed and parking facilities are to be discussed directly with the Victory Hall Committee.

#### 14. Grass Cutting/Verges

Cllr Leggett to take on this role, Clerk to pass on contractor information.

A resident requested that the Woodside Green grass be cut shorter if possible in the future.

#### 15. Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Wylie reported - since the last meeting one incident has been reported where GPS equipment was stolen from a farm in New Hall Lane. Even with the farm having lighting and CCTV the perpetrators went undetected.

On 30th March 2023 Cllr Wylie attended an on-line meeting of the Chelmsford and Maldon Group of Neighbourhood Watches. Matters discussed included purchasing display boards and a gazebo to be used at fetes, community events etc., continued drug taking hot spots, vehicle break-ins and theft - predominantly in urban areas. Chelmsford & Maldon Group of NHW Chairman Steve Leverett reported that on 27th March he had attended the national launch of the Government's Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan. The Prime Minister had presented what the Government's priorities were going to be, and the main involvement in Essex was with 'Hot-spot policing'. Their priorities continue to be ASB and violent crime and will engage with NHW re Hotspot Policing. NHW members are also key to providing intelligence across the district, using the WhatsApp messaging arrangements, which can then be monitored and actioned appropriately. There is a strong PCSO presence within the team who will be undertaking patrols.

##### **Current reminders as we head towards summer are:**

##### **Protect your garden:**

- If installing a new shed, ideally put it where your neighbours can see it to deter potential break in's.
- Keep sheds and gates locked using close shackle padlocks and pad bolts.

##### **Protect your home while you are away:**

- Be careful what you put on social media, make sure your posts are private. Maybe wait to post your photos when you are home.
- Ask a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your property.
- Consider asking a neighbour to park on your drive.
- Remember to make alternative arrangements for your deliveries.

##### **As a reminder, we should continue to report with as much detail as possible, using the most appropriate route as detailed below:**

- Calling 999 for Emergencies
- Calling 101 for reporting non-emergencies
- Reporting crime, incidents, and information on-line (see [www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk))
- Contacting police via on-line live chat (also via police website)

##### **And for Chelmsford/Maldon NHW there are two further channels:**

- Using the community policing email ([candmcp@essex.police.uk](mailto:candmcp@essex.police.uk)) for non-live intelligence
- Using the Police/NHW WhatsApp arrangement for live incidents.

Next Chelmsford Group NHW meetings will take place 31 May and 1 June via Zoom.

## 16. Woodside

To receive an update on the progress of negotiations with Moat Housing and the passing of the Woodside green to the Parish – The Clerk reported matters have been concluded and the solicitors will now complete the deed of transfer which will include an additional contribution of £1,000 from Moat Housing.

## 17. Website and Social Media

Cllr Rowsell reported - the website remains little used, but as a legal requirement is continually updated with agendas and minutes, as well as any other important messages or Highways projects.

Monthly usage reports show most visits tend to be via direct access (rather than from a search engine) and correlate with our Facebook posts.

Our Facebook page currently has 256 dedicated followers (up from 194 last year), with some posts reaching over 700 users, which for a Parish of just over 300 is very impressive. We often struggle with knowing what is acceptable to post, as the Parish Council Page cannot become a local social-chat site or be seen to effectively advertise for local businesses, so the emphasis is to share relevant local information that may affect residents. Whilst we are always open to suggestions on how to improve the service, far more information is usually already available on the website.

It was felt by a representative of the Victory Hall Committee that information relating to the Victory Hall was a little dated on the website, updates will therefore be provided to Cllr Rowsell.

## 18. Planning

### a) Planning Applications For Information Only and for Review

**Appeal - APP/X1545/W/23/3317079**

**22/00491/FUL PP-11144693**

Glenlene Main Road Mundon Essex

Construction of a two storey detached dwelling

**Appeal in progress as at 15 May 2023.**

### b) Planning Decisions (and awaiting Decisions)

**NMA/MAL/23/00242**

Whitehaven 3 Garlands Bungalow Mundon Road Mundon

Application for non-material amendment following grant of Planning Permission

22/00938/HOUSE (Single storey rear extension. Re-build with a pitched roof the existing extension to side. Front extension below existing roof structure.) Amendment sought: Extend existing rear pitched roof to previous extension over area of approved rear extension with glass gable to end. Existing roof line and heights maintained.

**Refused by MDC week 14 ending 6 April 2023**

**22/01070/FUL PP-11594619**

Land at Hook Farm, Mundon Road, Mundon

Proposed demolition of existing commercial structures and construction of 7 new dwellings with associated landscaping

**Refused by MDC week 13 ending 31 March 2023**

**23/00246/FUL PP-11995264**

Construction of a chalet bungalow

Land at Mapledean Pig Farm, Mapledean Chase, Latchingdon

**Clerk used delegation of power to respond to MDC on 4 April 23 – no objections, application supported.**

**Refused by MDC week 19 ending 12 May 2023**

**23/0331/LDE PP-12044336**

Wycke View Farm, Main Road, Mundon

Claim for lawful development certificate for an existing C3 dwelling without compliance with the relevant reserved matters MAR/253/67/1

**Clerk used delegation of power to respond to MDC on 2 May 23 – no objections, application supported.**

**Pending consideration as at 15 May 2023**

**23/00382/FUL PP-12059541**

Unit 19 Mapledean Works, Maldon Road, Mundon

Construction of new portal framed B2 light industrial building with part mezzanine floor and office

**Clerk used delegation of power to respond to MDC on 2 May 23 – no objections, application supported.**

**Pending consideration as at 15 May 2023**

**23/00342/VAR PP-12045353**

Wycke View Farm, Main Road, Mundon

Removal of condition 2 (occupation of dwelling) on approved planning MAR/253/67 (Erection of dwelling for agricultural worker, OS field 213, Sparrow Wycke Farm, Mundon

**Clerk used delegation of power to respond to MDC on 2 May 23 – no objections, application supported.**

**Pending consideration as at 15 May 2023**

**23/00327/HOUSE PP-12030297**

Erection of 6m x 6m cart lodge

Der A Lea, Main Road, Mundon

**Clerk used delegation of power to respond to MDC on 2 May 23 – no objections, application supported.**

**Pending consideration as at 15 May 2023**

**c) Planning Correspondence:**

Members to note receipt via email of the following:

List of planning applications weeks 12 to 19 - **Noted**

List of planning decisions and appeals weeks 12 to 19 - **Noted**

**19. Parish Council Land – Ownership and Boundaries**

To receive an update – the Clerk reported errors had been recognised in the first set of 3 transfer deeds. Updates had now been received, if agreed will be signed and returned to the Parish Council's solicitors for matters to be finalised.

**20. Highways**

- a) To receive any updates on outstanding or new highways matters – Clerk had liaised with Cllr Stamp regarding the previously reported issues with damaged speed signs which to date had not been addressed by Highways.

The following answer was provided by Highways.....

*Essex Highway Officers have advised that this work has not yet been programmed but will be as soon as priorities allow. I am sorry that I cannot give you a specific date but Officers will try to expedite the works as much as possible.*

Cllr Stamp asked the Clerk to apologise to Councillors and residents that no date can be provided at present.

Cllr Leggett had noted an adjoining parish had received many replacement speed signs recently – Cllr Rowsell to gather further information on how this has been achieved.

- b) To consider and resolve costs and information obtained for VAS and/or SID speed signs - Clerk currently drafting a schedule of costs, more recommended suppliers to review, work in progress, to be reported on further at the next meeting.
- c) To review information received from the Community Protection Team after carrying out regular speed checks via a TRUCAM –

March = 11

April = 9

Successful speeding offences enforced for the year April 2022 to March 2023 amounted to 97 offenders being prosecuted.

Clerk to research signs to display the results within the village.

## **21. Community**

- a) Fundraising Committee update – Cllr Leggett reported, a date had been set for the village fete being Saturday 12 August 2023 from 2-5pm. Next meeting to be held on Thursday 25 May, further updates to be provided at the next parish council meeting.
- b) Post Box Stud Farm – Clerk reported, although no specific date had been provided for the reinstatement of the post box, it was noted a post box, covered in black plastic, had been placed at the Bramble Hall access.
- c) Essex Police, Maldon Town Team Beat Surgeries – Clerk had been advised that a surgery could be held in May 2023. Clerk currently awaiting a response for specific dates and will continue to liaise.

## **22. Plume Educational Trust**

Cllr Wylie reported a Special Meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> May following Mrs Joan Binder standing down as Chair of the Trust. During the meeting Miss Sarah Dignasse, former Head Teacher of the Plume Academy, was voted in as Co-optative Trustee and Chair.

Following this was the Ordinary Meeting where the Annual Report was considered and approved and it was agreed that scholarships would be offered this year. The application forms have been updated and will be sent out with A-level results with the forms to be returned around 9<sup>th</sup> October (tba) so they can be reviewed and confirmed at the next Trust meeting to be held at the end of October.

## **23. Correspondence**

There was no additional correspondence other than what had already been circulated via email or detailed as a separate agenda item.

## **24. Finance**

- a) To review and approve receipts, payments and bank reconciliation for March and April 2023 - List of payments are circulated to members at the end of each month prior to the meeting – unanimously agreed and signed off by Cllr Rowsell.

Mar-23						
FOLIO	DATE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTON	NET AMT	VAT	GROSS
52/22-23	17/03/2023	Maldon District Council	Community Engagement Team Services - 1 Jan to 31 Mar 23	107.82	21.56	129.38
53/22-23	31/03/2023	Clerk	Salary and expenses month 12 - March 2023	409.89		409.89

Apr-23						
FOLIO	DATE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTON	NET AMT	VAT	GROSS
01/23-24	27/03/2023	Victory Hall	Victory hall hire x3 hrs May 2022 mtgs	24.00	0.00	24.00
02/23-24	03/04/2023	EALC	Annual affiliation fees for EALC and NALC 2023/24 Inv 16563	132.44	0.00	132.44
03/23-24	06/04/2023	April Skies Accounting	Audit fee for y/e 31 March 2023 Inv-0044	160.00	0.00	160.00
04/23-23	19/04/2023	Clerk	Expense claim - engraved plaque from The Engraving Shop	34.33	0.00	34.33
05/23-24	28/04/2023	Clerk	Salary - month 1 - April 2023	419.89	0.00	419.89

- b) To review and resolve the AGAR form together with the internal auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2023 –
- **Certificate of Exemption (page 3)** - no matters raised, form accepted and signed by Chairman and Clerk – unanimous decision.
  - **Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 (page 4)** – provided by April Skies Accounting together with the detailed annual audit report (to include two recommendations) – no other matters raised, form and report accepted, unanimous decision.
  - **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 (page 5)** – no matters raised, form accepted and signed by Chairman and Clerk, unanimous decision.
  - **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 (page 6)** – no matters raised, form accepted, previously signed by the Clerk, signed by the Chairman, unanimous decision.

- c) Clerk's report –

The parish council kept within the overall small budget for 2022/23 with some movement between budget headings during the year and the contingency budget being used. Total grants of £1,279 were gratefully received from the ECC Locality Fund towards saplings and the wood chipper. An annual reclaim of VAT was received during the year of £503.34. Capital items purchased were, further saplings re-planted on the main road verge, which in turn has slightly reduced the mowing costs for this year and a beacon for the Queen's Jubilee event.

The internal audit for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 took place on 6 April 2023 with two minor recommendations, use of the Cloud for future data backups and obtaining more detailed VAT invoices when dealing with Solicitors. Statutory reporting in relation to the audit will follow and information will shortly be displayed on the website.

The parish precept for the 2023/24 year is £7,000. Reserves at the end of the year were £1,000 for elections and £11,416.11 relating to the Church Room fund (allowed for capital projects only).

The budget for 2023/24 has already been set and will be closely monitored throughout the year with monthly reviews and reporting to councillors.

A question was raised as to why the Parish Council are required to pay (albeit at a reduced rate) to hire the Victory Hall for their meetings – Clerk to liaise with the Victory Hall Committee.

- d) Consider and approve the value of reserves to be carried forward to 2023/24 and confirm the 2023/24 Precept budget value – reserves £1,000 election expenses and £11,416.11 relating to the Church Room fund (allowed for capital projects only), the Precept value being £7,000 – values approved, unanimous decision.
- e) To consider and resolve annual insurance cover renewal from 1 June 2023 – renewal accepted, unanimous decision.

- f) To consider and resolve the use of the Cloud for future backup purposes – Clerk to initially review processes, providers and costs, unanimous decision.

**25. Training**

No requests for training were received.

New Councillor - following appointment will be offered formal training.

**26. External Meetings**

Victory Hall Committee meeting had been attended by Cllr Bennett and Cllr Leggett on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Cllr Bennett to provide a report at the next meeting.

**27. Information Exchange & Items for next Agenda**

Request from Cllr Leggett to further review village gateways – Clerk to obtain information.

No further requests were received for information exchange or items to be placed on the next agenda.

**28. Date of future meetings, next meeting – Tuesday 18 July 2023 @ 7pm**

**29. All business having been transacted, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.17pm.**



**ECC Annual report Southminster Division by Cllr Wendy Stamp 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023.**

Hopefully your Councillors and residents have been kept up to date throughout the year on the decisions being made as well as being considered in the future with my regular updates via your excellent Clerks.

I don't want to bore you with repeating anything so I will give you a brief report.

Starting with the positive and not highways this year, I must thank the clerks who have worked hard in supporting me this last year, especially by suggesting important community projects for the £5K locality fund allocation.

Sadly, due to a "mix up" not all my allocation was spent, despite having projects still wishing to be funded. I can only apologise but ask that when the next allowance is released you apply early as I won't allow this to happen again. I will not be holding any applications over to the next year – as no one knows how long this funding option will be available.

All Parish and Town Councils have received their funding now. I am sure the residents are enjoying what you applied for whether it be hedging, signage or building repairs.

Last year's terms of spending part of the allowance changed. The total allowance of £10k only allowed us to provide £5K on local projects and the remaining £5K on joint Maldon District projects, totalling £15K (three divisional ward councillors). I wish to thank my fellow Councillors Fleming and Durham, because I am over the moon to say the Southminster division received the lions share.

The projects awarded for funding within the Maldon District Division in the Southminster division are as follows: -

- Denige wide -£3500, SEND Music provision - new instruments, music man etc.
- St. Marys School – Burnham on Crouch, £325 breakfast and teatime clubs for children on free school meals. - to purchase dolls house, toy cars/garage, art & craft supplies, board games.
- St. Cedds – Bradwell £2200 to purchase six tablet computers (kept on site) for disadvantaged children for lunchtime and after school computing clubs.
- Southminster C of E School - £3728, this school has a growing number of SEND, PPG and vulnerable pupils. The lunch time club will benefit from the purchase of 10 chrome books and a contribution towards a Doodle Maths programme. It will also benefit after school clubs.

This totals the funding received for our division of £9523.00 EXCELLENT!

Thank you to everyone who helped put the proposals together and for ECC approving them – I am sure the equipment will help our richly deserved children and families immensely.

## **Budget Headlines.**

I sent a copy of the agreed budget figures previously but a quick recap total annual increase £49.05 equivalent to 49p per week. It is made up of £27.99 adult social care, £9.08 infrastructure projects and £11.98 service increase due to inflationary pressures.

Since being elected Cllr Fleming and I, have constantly been raising residents' concerns regarding the lack of infrastructure and future capital projects planned for the Maldon District including the Southminster division. Following a number of other District Councillors also raising concerns, Cllr Pond and I moved a motion to Council regarding infrastructure obligations and delivery. Cllrs Wagland and Sheldon proposed an amendment which we gratefully received. Sadly, not all elected members supported the spirit of the motion. Cllr Mark Durham and Cllr Stephen Robinson was disingenuous in my opinion. Recording of meeting 11 October 2022.

The approved motion read:

'This Council considers that there is a continuous need to ensure that the county's infrastructure, which is under constant pressure from new development, keeps pace with this development in a way that balances the need to promote economic growth and provides housing for residents, whilst also recognising the vital role of the Greenbelt in protecting their quality of life and the environment.

The Council therefore:

- 1) Instructs officers to be diligent in seeking to secure as many infrastructure improvements as possible via the planning system and in particular via infrastructure levies and planning obligation agreements.
- 2) Calls upon local planning authorities to assist the County Council by ensuring as much is delivered as possible.
- 3) Calls upon Government to support ECC in enabling the country's infrastructure to keep pace with new development as set out above.'

It is important that we all focus on ensuring delivery and soon.

Expansion of St Marys in Burnham has been completed as has the additional places at Ormiston Rivers Academy. Funding and additional places for SEND children has been given and delivered through section 106 agreements to Althorne pre-school but still no early learning pre school or additional nursery development in Burnham on Crouch – yet.

## **LIBRARIES**

The Essex year of reading delivered the following outcomes: -

- A library card for every child (150,000 cards delivered)
- A large range of author visits including Michael Rosen (1000 children attended Michael Rosen event).

- Parent ambassadors (supporting parental engagement for schools and communities) in conjunction with ACL – 2 Ambassadors, 60 volunteers, 600 parents onto courses.
- Dementia/memory cafes alongside library children's events (under the leadership of adult services).
- A literature corner in 74 libraries.
- Year of reading app including stories, teaching materials and signposts to other sources.
- Intergenerational poetry publication.
- Keeping it REAL/phonological awareness in early years.
- Using the libraries for warm spaces – committed to keeping the libraries open. Over 50,000 new members to the service and a new library in Harlow – we can but hope we will receive funding in the Dengie.

### **Everyones Essex.**

Cllr Bentley has a clear strategy, it is an intergenerational change, focusing on net zero, levelling up and devolution. He is aspiring to building a pathway to a better future. Whilst I absolutely agree with this aspiration and strategy, I am finding this is not inclusive of ALL resident's needs.

Sadly, we are all aware, despite raising genuine problems ranging from lack of local school places to local passenger transport for SEND children Essex County Council is unwilling to compromise even with special circumstances, the only option left is the appeal process.

Cllr Chris Whitbread, the "Chancellor" said they couldn't cater for the minority only the majority – hmm how is that levelling up on all levels – it is not in my opinion. Sadly, I feel the Southminster division has not been on the radar of ECC. Importantly when it comes to addressing rural challenges and lack of adequate services and investment. Substantial increase in traffic movements resulting in serious damage to the road network, reduced bus transport services, poor connectivity for walking and cycling, timely infrastructure delivery, planned digital investment to promote vital growth for local economy and tourism. Focus on the delivery of a local SEND school hence reducing the need for 75-minute travel times. It is important that we all, collectively continue working for change and deliver the projects that has been in the pipeline for years. Cabinet Members, Cllrs Scott, Ball and Egan have visited our division and several team meetings regarding lack of SEND provision and highway issues – not only potholes but flooding especially in Latchingdon and Creeksea.

Devolution is at the early stages, but I personally think it will rocket at a pace over the next few years depending on if Councils want to join.

The five arguments from Cllr Bentley are Economic – strengthening the community, powers around skills, transport, business support and housing would be devolved. The proceeds of economic growth would not all go back to the treasury but shared -

it will be worth more than £1 billion over 30 years (not much when you work it out) coming into the county. We would be responsible for economic and social well-being of our communities. Efficiency would help over stretched councils; collaboration is viewed as less burden to the taxpayers – you will have your own views and you should voice them when it comes to public consultation. The final point is the competition argument – more and more funding streams are being devolved to directly to Mayors and Combined Authorities. His full Council executive statement can be found here [Document.ashx \(essex.gov.uk\)](http://Document.ashx(essex.gov.uk)).

### **Essex Education Task Force**

'Everyone's Essex' aims to make Essex a good place for children and families to grow. The money originally granted to the Task Force by Essex CC has supported outcomes for vulnerable children, education outcomes, levelling up outcomes for families, and family resilience and stability. And we have so far invested **£1.5 million** in the **Essex Year of Reading** which has brought the fun and fundamentals of reading to all corners of the county: schools, libraries, adult education, memory cafes.

The very good news now is that the Task Force has been awarded - from the 'Everyone's Essex' reserves - a further **£1.5 million**.

Remarkably, this will mean that by the end of 2025, we shall have allocated a total of **£3.5 million** on improving outcomes for children and young people. The new grant makes explicit the continuation of the Task Force's work with the Year of Reading, young people's wellbeing and the launch of an exciting **Year of Numbers** recently announced in front of the Queen Consort. This is an innovative model that has been designed to complement, enhance, and build on the momentum from the Multiply work.

It is worth noting here that the Essex 2030 vision has five key aims:

- enjoy life into old age
- provide an equal foundation for every child
- strengthen communities through participation
- connect us to each other and the world
- share prosperity with everyone.

So many of the Year of Reading projects have contributed positively to these aims.

### **Safety Advisory Group (SAG).**

I am a member of this excellent group working and striving to deliver positive change. I have happy to have positively contributed due to having first-hand experience of challenging situations. I have helped by raising early suggestions and advice. This is headed up by Cllr Louise McKinley Deputy Leader and is a cross party group.

This is the latest initiative that has been launched..

### Bystander Intervention initiative launches in Essex

#### *Safety Advisory Group initiative aims to address sexual harassment in the county*

As part of Essex County Council's (ECC) commitment to making the county safer for residents, a new initiative has launched that aims to address sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour towards women and girls.

ECC's Safety Advisory Group's (SAG) 'Bystander Intervention' initiative launches today, Monday 13 March, on National Bystander Awareness day. The initiative aims to provide residents with information and guidance on what they could do if they saw inappropriate or threatening behaviour and gives advice on how they could address it in a safe way.

The online module has a particular focus on women's safety and sexual harassment.

Research conducted by the SAG in late 2021 found that 81% of women who responded were not confident that passers-by would help them if someone was acting inappropriately towards them. The same research showed that 60% of male respondents and 70% of women respondents didn't feel confident that they would be able to safely intervene if they saw someone behaving inappropriately towards a woman.

The module will help participants learn more what sexual harassment looks like, the myths and stereotypes that continue to enable and facilitate sexual harassment in our communities, and the importance of people not colluding with these myths or minimising unacceptable behaviour.

It will also give guidance on what actions they could take to safely intervene or to refer or signpost victims to suitable support services.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Louise McKinlay said: "Everyone in Essex has the right to live their life free of fear and free of harassment.

"Whilst much work is being done with us by schools, the police and communities across the county to eradicate sexual harassment, we know many women in the county still feel afraid when out at night, and this is not acceptable.

"Our new Bystander Intervention initiative is an opportunity for anyone in the county to learn about what they could do and how they could help when witnessing sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour. It is about equipping residents with the information and guidance to help them feel more confident to help in these situations.

"This initiative signals a real turning point in our efforts to make the county safer, particularly for women."

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex said "No woman should feel unsafe in their community, but the sad truth is that many do. It is up to all of us

to improve how women and girls are treated.

"This initiative by Essex County Council is a positive way to build awareness of what sexual harassment is and the actions that lead to women not feeling safe. By understanding the causes we can each contribute to improving women's safety."

The Bystander Intervention Information module is open to anyone in the county and only takes 45 minutes, visit [www.essex.gov.uk/bystander](http://www.essex.gov.uk/bystander)

to sign up.

### **Adult Social Care and Health.**

Everyone Matters – replaced with Meaningful Lives Matter plan for more inclusive Essex

Its aim is to enable people with disabilities to live the best life they can. Cabinet Member Cllr Spence is one of the best if not the best councillor for the subject knowledge and a genuine well-respected person.

Papers and surveys on this link :-

<https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/5073/Committee/36/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Cabinet decisions

[Document.ashx \(essex.gov.uk\)](http://Document.ashx(essex.gov.uk))

### **Highways**

I am loathed to even talk about potholes except that flooding will no doubt supersede the number of complaints reported to ECC in the near future.

The 38 priority pothole scheme was appreciated but with an area of this division it needs to be substantially more. I am pressing for the "temporary repairs" to be permanent. It should be rolled out again this year.

Cllr Scott has the most challenging portfolio and often tells us the following facts:

Network 4000 miles of footways,  
Over 5000 miles of roads,  
4000 miles of public rights of way,  
1500 highway structures,  
128,000 street lighting columns.

I know you all will have received the standard response from County "Please be assured that all publicly maintained roads throughout Essex are inspected in their entirety on a routine basis. The frequency of these inspections is dependent on the

classification of the road in question, for example, local roads are inspected annually, and priority routes are inspected more frequently on a monthly or quarterly basis due to the important function they perform within the highway network. Station Road is inspected on a quarterly basis.

The Highway Inspectors will also perform separate inspections of particular issues in response to reports made by members of the public.

During these inspections the Highway Inspectors risk assesses issues which are then prioritised for repair based on their severity and risk to public safety. The timescale for the repair depends on the risk assessment and which type of road the pothole is on. To view the different response times Essex Highways must adhere to, please visit the 'Potholes' page of the Essex County Council website:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/potholes>

If there is a particular pothole you are concerned about, you can report this to Essex Highways via their dedicated online Report it Tool:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us>. You will be given a unique reference number which you can use to track the progress of the inspection and the action taken."

Highways a handy quick guide:-

Useful links

Essex website [Essex Highways | Essex County Council](#)

Report an issue you have seen [Tell us - Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Track an issue you reported [Track it - Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Find out what road works are happening in your area [one.network](#)

Find out what works Essex highways are responsible for and planned programmes of capital works [Highways Information Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Find out about road works happening two weeks up to 12 months into the future [Future Roadworks Map | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Track gritters [Track the gritting lorries | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Essex highways latest news [News, Press Releases and Highway Highlights \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Further reading road strategies including annual maintenance plans [Road strategies | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

The Local Highways Panel has taken a lot of criticism from myself and another Councillor as it certainly has NOT delivered anything for years in this division. It is

changing but I can't see any imminent improvements yet, I will keep you all informed and up to date.

A letter has gone to Cllr Scott explaining all concerns and lack of progress. He is going to address them.

There is a couple of highway safety schemes under discussion now but again its early stages even after years of collecting data and evidence – a slow process is an understatement.

### **Primary School Offers 2023**

This year, Essex County Council received a total of 15,923 applications. Of these, 14,455 pupils who are due to start in Reception Year in September 2023 have been offered their parent or carer's first preference of primary school.

This is 90.78 per cent of the total eligible cohort and is an increase on the 89.51 per cent who obtained their first preference last year. Another 5.52 per cent of children were offered their parents' second preference of school.

Those who applied received confirmation by email on Monday 17th April.

These are the figures for 2023:

- \* First preference school – 90.78 per cent
- \* Second preference school – 5.52 per cent
- \* Third preference school – 1.75 per cent
- \* Fourth preference school – 0.45 per cent
- \* 1.5 per cent of pupils could not be offered one of their parent's preferred schools and have been offered a place at the nearest school with a place available.

Click below for information on school-based planning via ECC.

School organisation and place planning (<https://www.essex.gov.uk/school-organisation-and-place-planning/school-organisation-and-place-planning-service>)

A meeting has been scheduled for June for an update on school places, SEND provision and future schemes.

Essex County Council Climate Czar Cllr Peter Schwier, shares the first [Annual Essex Climate Action Report](#), 12 months after we announced our £200 million [Essex Climate Action Plan](#).

This report provides an update on the hard work that has been going on across the length and breadth of the county of Essex as we continue our journey to becoming a net zero county.

Essex has been rated as one of the best places in the world when it comes to tackling climate change. CDP, formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project



(CDP) has awarded Essex with an A rating for its climate action. We are the only county council in the UK to be given such a rating and only one of 122 places across the globe.

I think I have sent this link of how you can help previously but just for information.

[What Can I Do? | Essex Climate Commission](#)

### **Recycling Centre.**

[Vello | Essex County Council](#)

Can I ask everyone or anyone who wishes me to ask any questions daily or at Full Council to send me an email – with evidence and facts and I will do everything I can.

The booking scheme is still in operation being monitored and the facts reported back to Council.

I haven't covered everything in the report, but I hope I have kept you informed throughout the year.

As soon as the latest infrastructure report is published I will send to you but we are still working hard to press for the agreed delivery thus far.

Please continue to email me with any problems and thank you all for all your hard work and working together with me – trying to improve the place we live, love and work.

Wendy

Cllr Stamp

Southminster Division