

MUNDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 MAY 2024 AT 7PM IN THE VICTORY HALL

Email: mundonparishcouncil@yahoo.com
Website: Mundon.org – Tel: 07789 342747

Present: Cllr Gavin Rowsell (Chair), Cllr Kerry-Jane Wylie (Vice-Chair) and
Cllr John Bennett

In Attendance: Mrs Jackie Lines – Parish Clerk/RFO

Members of Public: 4

Meeting Commenced: 7.03pm

1. **Chairman's welcome and to receive apologies of absence** – apologies of absence were received and accepted from Cllr Leggett and District Cllr Fittock.
2. **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 as Vice Chair – **unanimous decision**. Individual Declarations of Acceptance of Office were duly signed by Cllr Rowsell and Cllr Wylie.
3. **Election of Representatives**
 - a) Finance – **(Cllr Wylie and Clerk with Cllr Rowsell covering in Cllr Wylie's absence)**
 - 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)**
 - 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 with Cllr Leggett as lead)**
 - 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)**
4. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a) To receive declarations of interest for any agenda items – no interests declared.
 - b) 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.
5. **Public Forum**

A resident requested an update on the Neighbourhood Watch position – refer minute item 14.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting – 19 March 2024

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19 March 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record – **unanimous decision**.

7. Review Frequency of Parish Council Meetings and Future Meeting Dates

- a) Meetings to continue on a bi-monthly basis – **unanimous decision**.
- b) Meeting dates were set for July 24 through to May 25, information to be displayed on the website and noticeboard – **unanimous decision**.

8. Councillors

Councillor vacancy to be filled by co-option – no applications had been received at present, continue to advertise.

9. County/District Councillors Report

ECC Cllr Wendy Stamp had provided an ECC annual report for the Southminster Division dated 14 April 2024 (Appendix A on the website).

10. Policies, Procedures, Risk Assessments and Contracts

To consider and resolve any annual or new drafts:

It was resolved to re-adopt the Code of Conduct for Members – **unanimous decision**.

11. Transport

Cllr Bennett reported, numerous online transport surveys continue to be completed on behalf of the village to ensure bus services are maintained to a satisfactory standard and represent the interests of the village.

It was agreed, a small sign would be placed in the bus stops to encourage real world feedback to Cllr Bennett, which will be most welcome.

The 31/331/332 buses run via Mundon and the Bus Fare Cap is available until 31 December 2024. Reliability of the buses can be a problem with non-attendance or no connection for onward journeys being available.

A resident confirmed the Dengie Dart is still available for concessionary passes, via Arrow Taxis and can be pre-booked directly with pickup from your door to Maldon and onward transfer to Broomfield (further details can be obtained from the mundon.org website).

The removal of the old pole/concrete block at the bus stop, on the Victory Hall side of the road, had been removed and concluded by the contractor.

12. The Furze

The Wood Wardens reported, due to the continual wet weather, The Furze has become very muddy and overgrown in places. An off road electric bike has also not helped by driving through and churning up the paths, this is being monitored.

A post has been broken at the back of the Victory Hall leading into The Furze and will require fixing.

Suspicious vehicle and driver activity, same vehicle on many occasions, has been logged and is being monitored and reported.

Wood Wardens to remove some weight from a large tree at the front of the The Furze, near to the Victory Hall, with the help of Cllr Rowsell if required.

13. Grass Cutting/Verges

Cllr Leggett provided a report - as it has been extremely wet, the initial cut was not very successful but the contractor, Mow My Lawn, has said they will return as soon as conditions dry out.

Cllr Leggett had been approached by a Mundon resident about the grass and had passed this message on.

14. Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Wylie reported - The 'Mundon Village Neighbourhood Watch' Facebook page is now up and running – it is a closed group for only those who live in the village, it can be found by searching on the name (sometimes you need to search on 'groups' and also by searching facebook.com/groups/2381394125383537). This will also be advertised on the Mundon website. Cllr Wylie will monitor and maintain the page and contents.

Chelmsford and Maldon NHW

The meeting reported on the demise of the WhatsApp phone number for Police/NHW Coordinators to report information/intelligence (it was a trial project and was never an official arrangement). There is now a mobile number available to the public to contact the Community Policing Team this number is 07773 932920 and can receive texts or calls (not photos). It can be used for everything non-emergency, including intelligence. It is not for reporting crimes (theft, burglaries, hate or violence etc.), road accidents or similar – for those use 999. It covers Chelmsford and Maldon 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Other items of discussion that affect our local village area are concerns raised about vehicles being driven around that have a strong smell of drugs coming from them. If a registration number is taken and passed to the Community Policing Team they can build a picture and potentially stop the vehicle while it is being driven.

Police responses are gauged in 3 levels: Emergency (minutes), Priority (hours), Scheduled (days). Please report **EVERY** crime.

WAYS TO REPORT CRIME:

999 for all Emergencies

101 or reporting Non-emergencies (but wherever possible report it on-line)

Essex Police Website www.essex.police.uk to report crime, incidents and information/intelligence

Contact police via online live chat (www.essex.police.uk)

Use the community policing email (candmcpt@essex.police.uk) for reporting local information/intelligence

Call or text the Community Policing Team (CPT) mobile phone 07773 932920
Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 to report crime anonymously

Next meeting with AGM is 23rd July 2024.

15. Woodside

Clerk reported – the Community Payback team fence painting project had been set back in April following staff illness. New dates are currently being reviewed for July 2024.

Clerk had noticed the Parish Council Noticeboard was looking a little tired. Wood Warden had felt the same and will review along with the Woodside sign.

16. Website and Social Media

Cllr Rowsell reported – The website remains more of a legal requirement than a regularly used community asset, but regardless, it is continually updated with agendas and minutes, as well as any other important messages, documents and links.

The website does hold many links to useful sites such as Essex Highways (for checking roadworks schedules, reporting problems etc.), Bus and Taxi services and a multitude of other useful links.

Monthly usage reports show the majority of visits are through direct access (rather than from a search engine) and correlate with specific posts MPC makes on Facebook.

The Mundon Facebook page currently has 302 dedicated followers, with some posts reaching many hundreds more, which for such a small village is quite impressive.

17. Planning

a) Planning Applications For Information Only and for Review

24/00376/LDE PP-13005076

Claim for lawful development certificate for existing use of an outbuilding known as ‘The Cabin’ as a separate independent dwelling unit.

Land Rear of Alma, Mundon Road, Mundon

Considered, resolved, no further evidence to provide - unanimous decision.

b) Planning Decisions (and awaiting Decisions)

23/0331/LDE PP-12044336

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

Wycke View Farm, Main Road, Mundon

Appeal withdrawn by appellant on 26 March 2024

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)

MDC confirmed on 26 March 2024 the appeal was allowed.

24/00226 PP-12842453

External_internal alterations to fenestrations and structural repairs

Limbourne Park Farm, Main Road, Mundon

Clerk used delegation of power to respond to MDC on 22 March 2024 - Mundon Parish Council have reviewed the above mentioned planning application, have no objections and support this application

c) **Planning Correspondence:**

Members noted receipt via email of the following:

List of planning applications, decisions and appeals weeks 12 to 20.

18. Highways

a) To receive any updates on outstanding or new highways matters –

The Clerk had noticed a large dip/erosion in the verge/side of the main road coming into Mundon from Latchingdon near the Mundon village sign on the left hand side – Clerk to report to ECC Cllr Stamp/Highways.

The resurfacing work throughout Mundon is felt to be of poor condition and sub-standard. White lining had now been completed – Clerk to provide feedback to ECC Cllr Stamp.

A resident had forwarded a schedule by email of outstanding highways jobs, which had been logged some time ago and not addressed, to the Clerk and ECC Cllr Stamp and requested for them to be reported via the Member Led Maintenance Scheme.

b) To consider and resolve matters relating to the crossing of the Main Road by mobility scooters – No further movement – ECC Cllr Stamp appreciates the importance to Mundon of the request for a pedestrian crossing and will endeavour to raise the issue at a Local Highways Panel (LHP) meeting or a full council meeting to try and establish the strict criteria required for this type of request.

c) To review information received from the Community Engagement Team after carrying out regular speed checks via a TruCAM – the monthly patrols continue and the results reflect:
March 2024 = 8 offenders
April 2024 = 6 offenders

d) To receive an update on village gateways – No further movement - the Clerk reported ECC Cllr Stamp had submitted a request to the LHP for their consideration, together with TruCAM data, for Mundon. The Parish Council have been advised that the LHP are currently under review and the matter could take considerable time to come to fruition.

19. Community

a) Fundraising Committee - Cllr Leggett reported, the date of this year's Village Fete will be Saturday 10th August from 2-5p.m. with an Olympic theme. A Poster had been prepared and other preparations are in hand. The Poster will be distributed to Villagers 6 weeks before the event.

One of our Wood Warden's had kindly made the two plant baskets for the bus shelter and Cllr Leggett had planted them up.

b) To consider and resolve Fundraising account expenditure – Cllr Leggett expenses for bus shelter planters and plants amounting to £31.97 were agreed – **unanimous decision.**

c) Martyn's Law – Clerk reported – Home Office officials had confirmed to the NALC and SLCC on 10 May 2024 they are still reviewing feedback from the recent standard tier consultation before making recommendations to ministers for the bill's introduction to parliament.

d) To consider and resolve allotment request.

No allotments currently available and no plans to establish any at present – **unanimous decision.**

20. Plume Educational Trust

Cllr Wylie attended a meeting held on 14th May chaired by the new Co-optative Trustee and Chair, Miss Sarah Dignasse, former Head Teacher of the Plume Academy. Those present looked at the current application form and it was decided to also create an online form for applicants. Trustees will discuss via email ways to improve the form as it has become outdated. It was also discussed that the scholarships should no longer be paid by cheque but paid directly into the student's accounts. It was agreed that having reviewed Trusts accounts that scholarships will be issued for the next academic year. In September the amount in the fund to offer for scholarships will be decided and applications will be received. In November the scholarships will be decided.

21. Correspondence

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

22. Finance

- a) To review and approve receipts, payments, bank reconciliation and budget v actual reports for March and April 2024 - 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-24						
FOLIO	DATE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTON	NET AMT	VAT	GROSS
43/23-24	28/02/2024	Maldon District Council	Inv MUN10390013 - Election 4 May 2023 uncontested fee and print costs	99.85		99.85
44/23-24	21/03/2024	DHGPC Chairman	DHGPC member parish council annual subscription fee for 2024	40.00		40.00
45/23-24	28/03/2024	Clerk	Salary and home office month 12 - March 2024	425.08		425.08
46/23-24	26/03/2024	Maldon District Council	Inv MUN20190360 - Community Engagement Jan to Mar 2024	121.59	24.32	145.91
47/23-24	28/03/2024	DHGPC Chairman	Return at bank of payment Folio 44/23-24 - dormant account	-40.00		-40.00

Apr-24						
FOLIO	DATE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTON	NET AMT	VAT	GROSS
01/24-25	02/04/2024	Victory Hall	Victory Hall hire x2 hrs for May 2024 meetings	16.00		16.00
02/24-25	01/04/2024	DHGPC Chairman	DHGPC member parish council annual subscription fee for 2024	40.00		40.00
03/24-25	02/04/2024	EALC	EALC and NALC annual affiliation fees for 2024/25	138.31		138.31
04/24-25	04/04/2024	April Skies	Final internal audit fee for year ended 31 March 2024	£87.50		87.50
05/24-25	09/04/2024	Mow My Law n	Grass cutting services for 6 April 24	£90.00		90.00
06/24-25	30/04/2024	Clerk	Salary and home office month 1 - April 2024	441.75		441.75

- b) To review and resolve the AGAR form together with the internal auditor's report and recommendations for the year ended 31 March 2024 –

- **Certificate of Exemption (page 3)** – no matters raised, form accepted and signed by Chairman and Clerk – **unanimous decision.**
- **Final Internal Audit Report 2023/24 (page 4)** - provided by April Skies Accounting together with the detailed annual audit report to include one recommendation for the general reserves to increase - It was agreed the election costs are already within the annual budget, reserves to remain in their respective accounts to earn interest and only draw down on unused capital reserves if an emergency arises – **unanimous decision.**
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 (page5)** – no matters raised, form accepted and signed by Chairman and Clerk – **unanimous decision.**
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 (page 6)** – no matters raised, form accepted, previously signed by the Clerk, signed by the Chairman – **unanimous decision.**

- c) Clerk reported, the parish council kept within the overall small budget for 2023/24 with some movement between budget headings during the year and the contingency budget being used.

A grant from the ECC Locality Fund was gratefully received in the value of £255.12 and used to purchase equipment for the fence repainting project for Woodside, which is scheduled to take place during 2024 by the Community Payback Team.

An annual reclaim of VAT for the year to 31 Aug 2023 in the value of £416.86, was received from HMRC in Sept 2023.

Capital items purchased as assets were, land at Woodside Green, dog fouling signs and speeding data signs. There was also income received for capital items from the sale of x3 small strips of parish land.

The internal audit for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 took place on 4 April 2024 with a recommendation for the general reserve to be reviewed and increased in future years to allow more of a buffer.

Statutory reporting in relation to the audit will follow and information will shortly be displayed on the website.

The parish precept for the 2024/25 year is £7,500. Reserves at the end of the year were £150.12 for elections, and £18,172.21 relating to the Capital Reserves.

The budget for 2024/25 has already been set and will be closely monitored throughout the year with monthly reviews and reporting to all Councillors.

- d) Consider and resolve the value of reserves to be carried forward to 2024/25 and confirm the 2024/25 Precept budget value - Reserves at the end of the year were £150.12 election expenses and £18,172.21 relating to the Capital Reserves, the value of the budget Precept being £7,500. This was received on 7 May with a further payment of £10.43 relating to late payment interest for one week - values approved, **unanimous decision**.

Consideration to be given for the use of capital reserves during 2024/25, projects to be reviewed, ideas welcome.

- e) To consider and resolve annual insurance cover renewal from 1 June 2024 – Clear (formerly BHIB) offered a renewal with a considerable increase this year. Three quotes had been obtained and the move to Zurich as the insurer for 2024/25 confirmed – **unanimous decision**.
- f) To consider and resolve new parish projects which the Locality Fund for 2024/25 could support – Ideas to be considered by Councillors and public in readiness for the next meeting in July.

23. Training

No new requests for training were received.

Second Wood Warden to attend Chainsaw Maintenance and Crosscutting refresher course at Writtle College when a suitable date becomes available.

The Clerk had obtained information regarding Defib training. A team could attend on the day of the fete (but not as first aiders), chat to people and take blood pressures etc. An alternative is to hold a presentation for residents during the week in the Victory Hall for around 1.25

hours with a question and answer session of how the equipment works – Chairman proposed the matter be passed to the Fundraising Committee for further review and feedback.

24. External Meetings

To receive reports on any external meeting attended by Councillors or Clerk – no external meeting details to report.

25. Information Exchange & Items for next Agenda

A resident had noticed the post box in Garlands Chase had been hit recently – Cllr Wylie to review.

No further requests received.

26. Date of future meetings, next meeting – Tuesday 16 July 2024 @ 7pm

27. All business having been transacted, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.33pm.

Appendix A

ECC Annual report Southminster Division by Cllr Wendy Stamp 14th April 2024

Hopefully your Councillors and residents have been kept up to date throughout the year on the decisions being made as well as new initiatives, transformation projects – consultations and strategic direction for the future via the regular updates I send to your excellent Clerks or Chief Officers instead of a monthly report. A monthly report can often result in missing urgent updates and press releases. Can I thank everyone for sharing all the important information and links to important references and legislation, on your Council websites and notice boards where possible. There is little point in repeating anything shared thus far, so I will give you a *brief* report. Believe me I could have written even more.

Starting with the positive, I must thank the clerks and chief officers, again, for their support and professionalism who have worked hard for applying for funding for important community projects for the locality fund allocation and the free trees offered. Both are excellent opportunities and the locality fund that will continue. I have no doubt ECC will continue to lead on tackling the real climate emergency. U tube link is <https://youtu.be/78B52uKEHtU?si=xJ7Vml6sgfO24aR6> The remainder was renamed 'Local Community Fund.' The Local Community Fund operated as twelve separate funds, each covering the area of a district, borough or city council. The fund for each district was £4,000 for each county councillor representing the relevant area. The fund had to be spent on one of three areas: Levelling up, Tackling Climate Change, and Youth services.

We (the ECC Division Members for the Maldon District) decided to direct funding specifically to help our secondary schools to purchase educational and pastoral care resources and to projects to support young people in the District. The projects funded to go into our secondary schools were a production called 'Shadows' produced by N-Act, a 'Do you Hear Me' work shop produced by Tic Box Productions, and Resilience Voyage for the visit of the County lines "Drugs Bus", a double decker bus designed to educate and to raise young people's awareness of gangs, grooming, and knife crime to our schools.

For our secondary schools we also funded the purchase of Check Your Drink (CYD), easy to use drug detection strips to be made available to sixth form students. These strips test for both GHB and Ketamine, the two most widely used drink spiking drugs.

We also funded two one day events at the Maldon and Burnham Skate Parks run by King Ramps. The events were aimed at 100-150 young people with demonstrations from some of the country's top professional skateboarders and BMX riders. Competitions were held at the end of the events which were open for all abilities and judged by professionals. King Ramps provided prizes for the top 3 places in skateboard, scooter and BMX competitions. Workshops were also open to all ages and abilities for which full safety equipment (helmets knee, elbow and wrist pads) and skateboards and BMX bikes was provided.

The Locality Fund and the Local Community Fund open again for applications this May, so if you have a project or community initiative, please do contact me with your suggestions/applications at cllr.wendy.stamp@essex.gov.uk

Outside of our secondary schools we provided funding to the MDCVS Community Gaming Initiative project which runs activities for people, particularly younger people, to build social connections and other skills such as team working and problem solving.

Essex County Council announced in February of this year the review of the Local Minerals Plan. The Minerals Local Plan Review Consultation was launched on the 6th of February and will finish on the 9th of April. Hopefully, many of you will have taken the time to comment on both the draft Replacement Minerals Local Plan.

Also launched in January of this year, was the Mid & South Essex Integrated Care Boards' Consultation on 'Proposed Changes to Services at Local Community Hospitals'. A huge number of residents responded on future of St Peter's Hospital and the future of medical services in the district-thank you. We all know the transport infrastructure is lacking in the Dengie thus causing major difficulties getting to appointments at Maldon, never mind Brentwood, Braintree and Broomfield.

Budget Headlines

The 2023/24 financial year was a challenging year. Like many councils up and down the country, Essex County Council experienced pressure on both Adult's and Children's Services and Home to School Transport. The care market continues to struggle with capacity, and there is still uncertainty around the timing and financial impact of potential care reform. The Council continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty and volatility - inflation has begun to reduce, although it is still above the Bank of England target rate, interest rates remain high and the Council continues to face a significant level of uncertainty in the medium term.

Essex County Council has a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reductions in Government grant funding over recent years, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for core services such as caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting those families who need it, the financial situation continues to be challenging.

In February, Essex County Council agreed its new Budget for 2024/25. The Council again had difficult choices to make to produce a balanced budget. They were to increase taxes or facing unacceptable and unpalatable cuts in services – never popular and much frowned upon as many disadvantaged residents in our society are often on the receiving end. The Council balanced the budget against unforeseen financial pressures caused by the need to support the recovery from Covid, the cost-of-living crisis, the war in Ukraine, the energy cost hike, high inflation levels plus existing challenges to reform and reshape our services. We still must ensure we look after and respond to huge increases in demand from those vulnerable in our society and who need our help the most.

Understanding the cost-of-living crises, ECC has created a £50million cost of living programme, investing in summer clubs so that thousands of young people can participate in holiday activities and have a hot meal when not in term time school.

The Council continues not to close libraries but to improve them and working to improve the country parks and green spaces, supporting everyone's health & wellbeing.

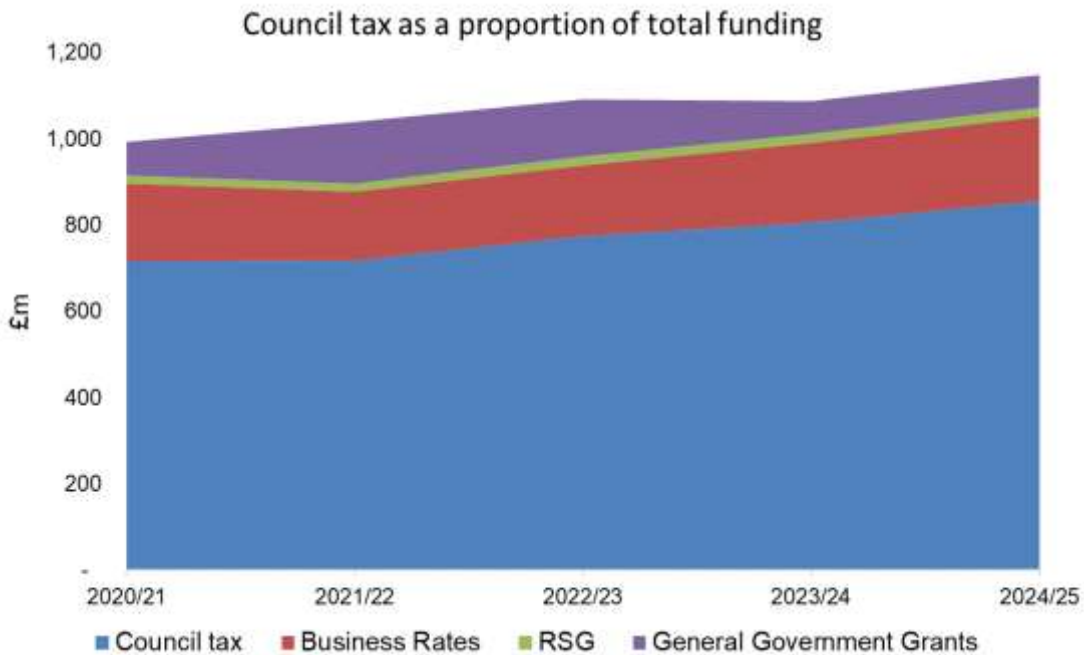
The Everyone's Essex Annual Plan, strategic aims and budget was approved at Full Council and the net cost of services was set at £1,148.0million (m) for 2024/25 and the net revenue budget requirement was set at £1,073.4m (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2024/25. The strategic aims are:-

- Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- High quality environment.
- Health, wellbeing and independence for all ages.
- A great place for children to live and grow.

The total council tax funding requirement was set at £848.3m for 2024/25 – Essex County Council's element of the council tax was increased by 4.99% comprising of a 2.99% increase in general council

tax and 2.0% adult social care precept. This spending supports the most vulnerable in our communities including older people, people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and physical and sensory impairments. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from having to make higher savings, and support growth in need caused by changes in the demographics of our population and inflation, including the national living wage rise.

This resulted in the Essex County Council element of the council tax being £1,522.53 for a Band D property in 2024/25 - this is an increase of £1.39 per household per week.



Net expenditure of £1,148m is funded by council tax, business rates, Revenue Support Grant and General Government Grants. Income from Council Tax is the largest funding stream and will make up 75% of our funding in 2024/25.

Everyones Essex

I have decided to include the paragraph underneath as it was in last year’s report. I am happy to say some of below IS now a higher priority – the actual delivery is frustratingly slow. More important is the delivery of local schools including the support and improvement for our SEND community. I was hoping to be able to say “things have got better” but they haven’t. This cannot be only laid at ECC door but Central Government and Dept of Education. Whilst I understand the complexities of individual needs – it is vital that ECHP (Educational Care Health Plans) are carried out within 20 weeks – ECC only achieve 1%!

At the recent PAF (People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee), held on 14th March 2024 an unprecedented number of questions from the public was submitted 18 – some residents attended in person. I suggest if you are able to watch this meeting on u tube you should. There are a number of ECC Councillors who still work hard to meet the needs of our SEN children as we believe everyone deserves a fair chance to receive a good education. I will take this opportunity of thanking all the parents who contact me for help and highlighting the unacceptable, inadequate unfair education system we are in but a special thank you to Chantelle Poulter – Dengie SEND and Tara Strydom – Burnham SEND.

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.

On a positive note here is the link for ECC’s Levelling up year 2. Its 25 pages long but a snap shot is on page 5.



<https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-03/Levelling%20up%20year%20two%20impact%20report%20-%20Reaching%20new%20heights.pdf>

Highways and Local Highways Panel

Since my last report the Council has had a change of cabinet member - Cllr Tom Cunningham. At Full Council, they made the welcome announcement of an additional £12m for highways maintenance, £8m of which will go to fund additional highways crews to be tasked by their local councillor, an extra £2m to go to Local Highways Panels and also funding for extra enforcement resources. The details of the scheme for locally directed maintenance work will be announced shortly. I certainly hope they will deliver for everyone and it will now be fit for purpose as it hasn’t been for over nine months! I have

wasted hours and hours, working hard for residents, and delivering very little – something I am not accepting responsibility for!

Schemes that I have submitted in the division is numerous with limited delivery. The only ones completed are the repair of Burnham on Crouch Quay and Whitney Road plus 20s Plenty Scheme for Dunkirk Road around the school. Local Highways Panels are due a reset at the end of this month in terms of what type of scheme will fall within their remit and an announcement is due shortly. I continue to argue for schemes within the Southminster Division and District to be a funding priority as speed reduction and highways safety are vital for those living and driving on rural roads. We all know how long we have been trying to reduce the speed on B1010 through Althorne and despite approval it has still to be delivered – I fear more U turns. The fatalities on our rural roads and accidents have sadly risen with the number of accidents increasing.

Quick links- again but ever useful:-

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.”

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 \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Throughout the year, I have continued to support residents with their highway problems but can I ask pot holes, white lines and flooding defects are reported to your parishes and town clerks first and then to me - with the reference number - if the issue requiring escalation contact me at cllr.wendy.stamp@essex.gov.uk

Boundary Changes

There will be boundary changes next year in time for next year's County Elections. I have sent out the possible changes. I will of course update you all when the final changes have been agreed.

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