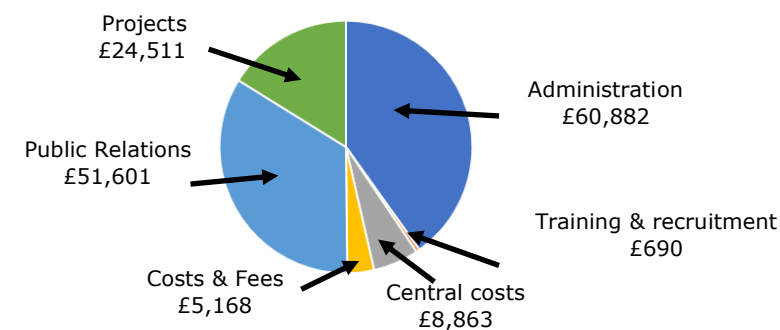


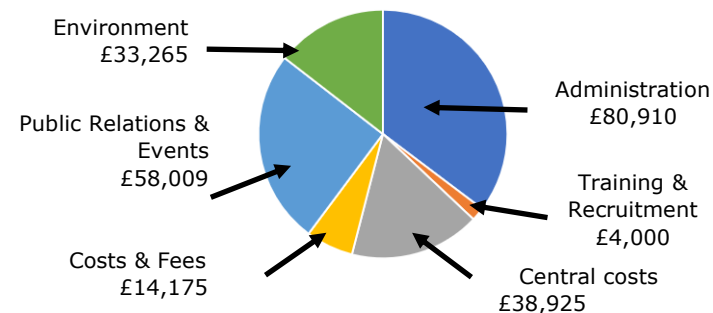
Financial Report

The Town Council's Precept for 2023-24 was £222,255 and for 2024-25 it has been set at £229,284. For a Band D property the amount is £23.40. This equates to a 3.59% increase (81p for a Band D)

Expenditure 2023-24 £151,715



Budget & Forecast 2024-25



Councillor Attendance at Meetings May 2023 to April 2024

Total number of meetings **27**

Council Meetings **8** Finance & Resources Committee meetings **5**

Environment & Leisure Committee meetings **4** Market Committee **2**

Planning & Infrastructure Committee meetings **6** Personnel Committee meetings **2**

Councillor A Ball	21	Councillor David Harrison	12
Councillor S Blake	7	Councillor Derek Harrison	25
Councillor G Bradley	18	Councillor N Hoad	12
Councillor E Brockman	17	Councillor S Mott	17
Councillor N Dermott	5	Councillor A Neil	16
(from 8/1/24)		Councillor K Oakes	14
Councillor L Dodds	10	Councillor S Oakes	19
Councillor G Douse	21	Councillor G Randall	3
Councillor G Ellis	14	(from 4/3/24)	
Councillor L Gann	16	Councillor A Stead	4
Councillor C Gregory	1	Councillor G Whiter	20
(from 4/3/24)			

Councillors can attend any meeting whether they are a Committee member or not. The above list is for all meetings. It does not include the Council's Working Party meetings.

Monthly Meet Your Town Councillor events are held in Wickford High Street on the 3rd Saturday of the month. These drop in sessions are ideal if you would like to speak to one of your local Town Councillors about issues in and around Wickford.



Wickford Town Councillors

Chairman of the Town Council 2023-24, Councillor Derek Harrison

Vice Chairman of the Town Council 2023-24, Councillor Graham Bradley

Wickford Castledon Ward

Councillor Graham Bradley
Councillor Gerald Douse
Councillor Louise Gann
Councillor Stewart Mott
Councillor Andrew Neil
Councillor Geoff Randall

Wickford North Ward

Councillor Eunice Brockman
Councillor Lee Dodds
Councillor Graeme Ellis
Councillor Derek Harrison
Councillor Nicola Hoad
Councillor Andrew Stead
Councillor Stephen Whiter

Wickford Park Ward

Councillor Alan Ball
Councillor Simon Blake
Councillor Nigel Dermott
Councillor Clare Gregory
Councillor David Harrison
Councillor Kim Oakes
Councillor Stephen Oakes

Contact Us

Town Clerk - Tory Melhuish
01268 858979

clerk@wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

www.wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

www.facebook.com/WickfordTownCouncil



Wickford Town Council



Annual Report 2023-24

This is the Annual Report for Wickford Town Council and it provides information on the Town Council's activities and expenditure for 2023-24. Also provided, is the Town Council's aspiration and projects for future years.

The Town Council was formed in May 2022 after two and a half years as a Shadow Town Council and followed the making Basildon Borough Council's Community Governance Re-organisation Order.

Twenty Councillors were elected to serve the 25,000 residents of Wickford and it employs a full time Town Clerk.

In May 2023, Councillor Derek Harrison elected as Chairman of the Town Council along with Councillor Graham Bradley appointed as Vice Chairman.

Chairman's Report by Councillor Derek Harrison

As we come to the end of the second year of Wickford Town Council we can reflect on the year.

We were able to reduce the precept from the first year and although it will increase for 2024-25 it remains below the initial rate set by Basildon Borough Council.

In June last year former Cllr John Janaway sadly passed away. John was dedicated to the work of improving the town both before and after becoming a Town Councillor.

Other Councillors moved away and we were below strength for a while but we are pleased to welcome the residents that have joined us as Councillors and we are now at full strength.

In August we hosted a Community showcase event in the High Street to enable local groups to advertise what they have to offer. We are pleased to say the whole event was welcomed by residents and clubs and organisations gained additional members.

We also held a series of summer fun days for youngsters in the Memorial Park and an All on Board skateboarding event for older youths in Nevendon Park. Events and dates for 2024 can be found elsewhere in this report.

As I reported last year, officialdom continues to delay items we are trying to achieve, however, we did manage to replace the litter bins in the High Street with branded new ones. With the help of volunteers and Councillors we planted upwards of 35,000 spring bulbs mainly daffodils and tulips around the area and these brightened it up somewhat after a dreary winter.

The Town Council took over the running of the Christmas lights for the first time last year and we had a real tree for the first time in many years.

Would you like to shape how Wickford looks in the future? If so, we would welcome you to join the Steering Group for the Neighbourhood Plan, details are elsewhere in this report.

All Council and Committee meetings are normally held at The Wick Community Centre, Silva Island Way starting at 7pm.

Dates of meeting for 2024-25 can be found on the Town Council's website and noticeboards around the town.

www.wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Community Speedwatch

Christmas Lights Switch on

Would you like to be part of a new group in Wickford?

This year's Christmas lights switch on is being held on:

The Community Speedwatch Group is looking for volunteers



Saturday 16 November
at 4.30pm



Completed Projects & Events

New litter bins were installed in the High Street, as a start to the planned public realm improvements.

Funding for the installation was provided by County Councillors Ball and Buckley from their allocated Locality Fund.

It is hoped to install more Wickford bins around the town over the next couple of years.



Spring bulb planting

During Winter 2023, volunteers and Town Councillors planted 35,000 bulbs in various green spaces in the town.

In Spring of this year, beautiful displays of daffodils and tulips could be seen.



Riverside Walk Tree Planting

To finish the Riverside Walk project a number of small trees were planted by volunteers, Town Councillors and children from Wickford Primary School.

Trees were kindly provided by Essex County Council with the assistance of County Councillor Malcolm Buckley.

The planting was organised by officers from Basildon Borough Council.



The Town Council held a number of successful events in 2023, the Community Showcase in the High Street and the All on Board Skateboarding event at Nevendon Park. Summer Fun throughout the school holidays in Wickford Memorial Park.

All were very well attended by all ages.



Town Council Events

The Town Council has planned a number of events to be held over the next few months.

Wednesday 29 May 2pm to 4pm
Wickford Memorial Park
Punch and Judy

Thursday 6th June, 8.30pm to 9.30pm
Wickford Memorial Park
D Day 80 celebrations
Beacon lighting, march, food & drink

Saturday 22 June, 7pm
Wickford Memorial Park
Jazz in the Park
Music, food & drink



Saturday 13 July, 7pm
Wickford Memorial Park
Shakespeare in the Park
Play, food & drink



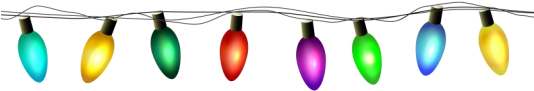
Bring your chair/picnic blanket

Summer Fun in the Park
at Wickford Memorial Park
2pm to 4pm

Wednesday 24 & 31 July
Wednesday 7, 14, 21, 28 August



FREE entertainment for all the family.
Bring along your own picnic & chairs
Don't forget the suncream and a hat!



Saturday 16 November, 4.30pm
Wickford High Street
Christmas Lights switch on

Friday 6 December, 2pm
Runwell Parish Hall
Senior Citizens Christmas buffet lunch
Tickets on sale in October.

Grants Scheme

The Town Council has an Annual Grants Scheme which is open to all local community groups and organisations in Wickford. This scheme is to encourage and assist groups carry out activities for the benefit of Wickford residents.

Grants awarded in 2023 included the following:
MyOTAS £2,859
Wickford in Bloom £2,000
Wickford Town Carnival £1,000

The scheme for the 2025 financial year will be open from September 2024 and application forms will be available at that time. Contact the Clerk for further information.



Neighbourhood Plan for Wickford

The Town Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wickford. Neighbourhood Planning was introduced in the Localism Act 2011 and it is an important and powerful tool that gives communities statutory powers to shape how their community develops.

In simple terms, a Neighbourhood Plan is a document that sets out policies for the neighbourhood area. It is written by the local community, the people who know the area. If you would like to join the Steering Group - please get in touch.

A Scoping Report for Wickford has been produced and is available on the Town Council's website:
<https://wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

An engagement day was held on Saturday 20 April in the High Street where residents were asked for their views on all aspects of the town and future development.

The Town Council has set up a Steering Group to produce the Neighbourhood Plan and local residents and businesses are asked to join the group. Please register your interest with the Town Clerk, tel 01268 858979 or email clerk@wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk



Wickford Market

The Town Council will shortly be taking over the operation of Wickford Market from Basildon Borough Council.

It will remain in its current site at the end of Market Lane but the Town Council is committed to re-establishing the Market to the High Street.

This will involve talks with the local bus companies and Essex County Council.

We will be encouraging new stalls to the Market along with additional trading days and other events.

If you are interested in having a stall or pitch at the Market please get in touch.



Other Projects

For 2024-25, the Town Council has agreed to fund the following (subject to approval from other Authorities):

Planting of the BP roundabout - tree planting - Town Signs - finger posts - replacement/repair of the High Street railings - additional street furniture - events - community speed watch - community special constables - Neighbourhood Plan - Town Council office premises