

WICKFORD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Held at St Catherines Hall, Southend Road, Wickford
on **THURSDAY 25 May 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present:

Town Councillors

Chairman: Councillor Derek Harrison

Councillor S Blake

Councillor L Gann

Councillor A Neil

Councillor J Wood

Councillor G Bradley

Councillor N Hoad

Councillor K Oakes

Councillor G Ellis

Councillor S Mott

Councillor S Whiter

Essex County Councillors

County Councillor L Scott

County Councillor T Ball

Other

James Hendry, Head of Environmental Services, Basildon Borough Council

Town Clerk, Mrs T Melhuish

Members of the Public - 40

The Chairman of the Town Council, Councillor Derek Harrison welcome everyone to the first Annual Town Meeting for Wickford.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Town Councillors Ball, Brockman, Dodds, Douse, David Harrison, L Harrison, S Oakes

County Councillor K Bentley

Basildon Borough Councillor C Morris

Mark Francois, MP

Councillor J Woolf, Chairwoman Shotgate Parish Council

2. Guest Speaker

County Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport.

Councillor Scott addressed the meeting on a number of issues:

Pothole repairs – additional funding of £17.4m for the county and 12 new teams allocated for pothole repairs.

Additional methods of transport being encouraged – walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Speeding and inappropriate parking around schools – being addresses by the use of fines.

Public Transport – a new on demand fleet of electric buses being introduced.

Councillor Scott answered questions from residents on the subject of highways maintenance (in particular the recent gas works on Southend Road); poor bus service; roadworks in Hyde Way; road conditions; overgrowing vegetation; A127 dual carriageway; Wickford railway station; Ulez; Castledon School planning application; budget for pothole repairs; flooding Park Drive; Gibraltar Walk footbridge.

Residents were reminded of Essex County Council's online reporting tool.

County Councillor Scott left the meeting.



James Hendry, Head of Environmental Services, Basildon Borough Council

James Hendry addressed the meeting on the following issues relating to recycling and waste: The Borough Council's Waste Strategy is trying to improve the efficiency and environmental impact of waste services and various changes have been and will be introduced across the Borough.

From 5 June collection of garden waste will be a chargeable service as it is a discretionary service. Residents will need to sign up and pay for the service, they will then receive a bar code which will be affixed to their brown bin for collection.

Non-recyclable waste will be collected every fortnight and a new black wheelie bin will be provided. The pink sacks will be replaced with reusable bags for paper and cardboard.

Recycling officers from the Borough Council are happy to attend community groups to provide the information and will also be periodically in the Library.

James Hendry answered questions from residents on the subject of issues with signing up to the new service online; how many food caddies per household; subsidies for senior citizens; reduction in Council costs = redeployment of staff; how many black wheelie bins per household; bring back the crunch service; bulky waste collection; what consultation was carried out prior to the new service being established; new reusable bags will blow away – will be weighted at the bottom; street cleansing; green waste charges for future years; drains blocked in the High Street; recycling centres and fly tipping.

Residents were advised to contact either James Hendry at Basildon Borough Council or the Town Clerk for Wickford Town Council if there experienced any difficulties with the new system.

The Chairman of the Town Council, Councillor Derek Harrison thanked the two speakers. James Hendry left the meeting.

3. To receive the Annual Report 2022-23

Copies of the Annual Report were provided at the meeting and would also be made available on the Town Council's website.

The Chairman reported that this was the first Annual Town Meeting following the Town Council's first year of operation.

A number of projects had been completed:

- 5 new noticeboards around the town
- Riverside Walk, London Road – completion of works with the Borough Council and part funding from the County Council
- Christmas lights to be provided for 2023
- Precept for 2023-24 had been reduced

The Chairman answered questions from residents on the subject of Tudor Way proposed planning development; election for Councillors for the Town Council; what is happening with the old Co-op site; the Town Council evolved from the Wickford Action Group; Budget 2023-24; administration and staff costs; meeting dates available on the website and noticeboards; tree planting scheme; publication of accounts; what does the Town Council get from Basildon Borough Council; flooding.



The Chairman stated that the Town Council' website contained a lot of information about the Council and its activities.

Suggestions from residents were welcomed.

The Chairman thanked his wife, the Clerk, fellow Councillors and the members of the public who had attended. They were more than welcome to attend any Council and/or Committee meetings.

There being no further to be transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

Signed Chairman

Date: 17 May 2024

