

**WICKFORD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
Held at the Nevendon Centre, Wickford  
on **FRIDAY 17 May 2024 at 7.00pm**

**Present:**

**Town Councillors**

Chair: Councillor Derek Harrison

Vice Chair: Councillor Graham Bradley

Councillor A Ball

Councillor G Ellis

Councillor S Mott

Councillor S Oakes

Councillor N Dermott

Councillor L Gann

Councillor A Neil

Councillor G Randall

Councillor G Douse

Councillor C Gregory

Councillor K Oakes

Councillor S Whiter

**Essex County Councillors**

County Councillor T Ball

County Councillor M Buckley

**Basildon Borough Councillors**

Councillor A Myers

**Other**

Mark Francois, MP for Rayleigh and Wickford

Sujun Fieldhouse, Senior Economic Development Officer, Basildon Borough Council

Sgt Ben Bayley, Essex Police Community Team

Town Clerk, Mrs T Melhuish

Members of the Public - 20

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

**1. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting 25 May 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Annual Town Meeting held on 25 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. Guest Speakers**

Mark Francois, MP for Rayleigh and Wickford

Mr Francois had 4 main topics to report on:

- i. Wickford Station – The Department of Transport had agreed to fund the rebuild of the station and tender documents are in the process of being issued
- ii. Heriot site (old Co-op) – this is a complicated situation. Talks have taken place with a major supermarket to redevelop the site with flats on the top floors above the retail unit
- iii. Talks of a new public house (Weatherspoons) coming to Wickford have fallen away, however, the new Wickford BID Town Team may be able to pick this up again
- iv. There will be a new special needs school in Wickford – Rawreth Lane, Wickford which will have close links to Wickford. A total of 190 places on 2 sites

Mr Francois received questions on the following topics – building of flats, old police station site, school staffing levels,



At 7.45pm, Mr Francois left the meeting.

Sujun Fieldhouse, Senior Economic Development Officer, Basildon Borough Council

Ms Fieldhouse explained how the Town BID works and how it is being developed in Wickford. Wickford will be made a destination and is a collaboration between public and private sectors. Progress to date includes the commissioning of a consultant and the development of the Town Team, made up of the public and private members.

Essex County Councillor Tony Ball, Basildon Borough Councillor Brockman and Town Councillor Graham Bradley are all members.

All businesses in Wickford have been consulted and the BID has been registered with the Secretary of State. A business plan is being developed.

The next step are for on going activity and branding to promote it.

Sujun Fieldhouse answered questions from residents on the following:

The Wickford BID could attract different type of businesses to Wickford and other examples are Southend, Colchester and Billericay.

Essex Police Community Policing Team, Sgt Bayley

Sgt Bayley introduced himself as the new Sergeant for Wickford and informed residents of the current crime trends.

Wickford is split into 3 beat codes.

Violence against the person (common assault) decrease of 4.5%

Shoplifting reduction of 121 thefts

Burgularly increase in Wickford

Robbery increase

Possession of weapons and drug offences – 19

Theft of the motor vehicle increase

Anti social behaviour

There is a proactive police response. The team of 22 is operated from Basildon, there is also a vehicle team tackling vehicle crime and a business crime team. The Town Link service works well amongst the businesses in the High Street. The licensing team work with local pubs and bars. There will be Safer Action Business Days held to raise awareness, pop up events and the regular Lets Talk events.

Sgt Bayley answered questions from residents on the following:

Dangerous road users, conditions of animals, drug use and drug supply, expansion of CCTV in the town.

Borough Councillor Myers reported on the variation of the Public Spaces Protection Order which may include the High Street. Consultation dates to be advised.

The Chair of the Town Council, Councillor Derek Harrison thanked the speakers.

**4. To receive the Annual Report 2023-24**

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

The Chair reported on the newly formed Steering Group and volunteers are being sought to help produce the Neighbourhood Plan for Wickford.

**5. Questions from Residents**

What is in the for Budget 2024-25



Answer – projects, underspends from last year have been Earmarked  
Steering Group meeting  
Answer – as and when

The Chair thanked the members of the public who had attended, his wife, fellow Town Councillors and the Town Clerk.  
More information about the Town Council is available on the website and facebook page.  
Residents are more than welcome to attend any Council and/or Committee meetings.

There being no further to be transacted, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.

Signed Chair .....

Date: 24 April 2025

