



Wickford Town Council

Forward Plan

2026-2030

Town Clerk: Tory Melhuish
Unit 1 Wych Elm House, Nevendon Road, Wickford, Essex SS12 9RZ
Telephone: 01268 858979
Email: clerk@wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk
www.wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

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Introduction

Wickford Town Council has a long-term strategy by means of a Forward Plan which is developed every 4 years.

The plan is designed to form a long-term vision for the Town Council to follow; many of the issues identified may take several years and a significant amount of money to achieve. Some issues may require the help and resources of external bodies and this will be dependent on the available resources.

The Forward Plan contains Key Themes and Priorities for the current year which will be a rolling document, regularly reviewed and amended as the various Themes and Priorities are achieved and new ones identified.

Background



Wickford Town is an urban community in the county of Essex, with a population of approximately 36,000 residents (including Shotgate).

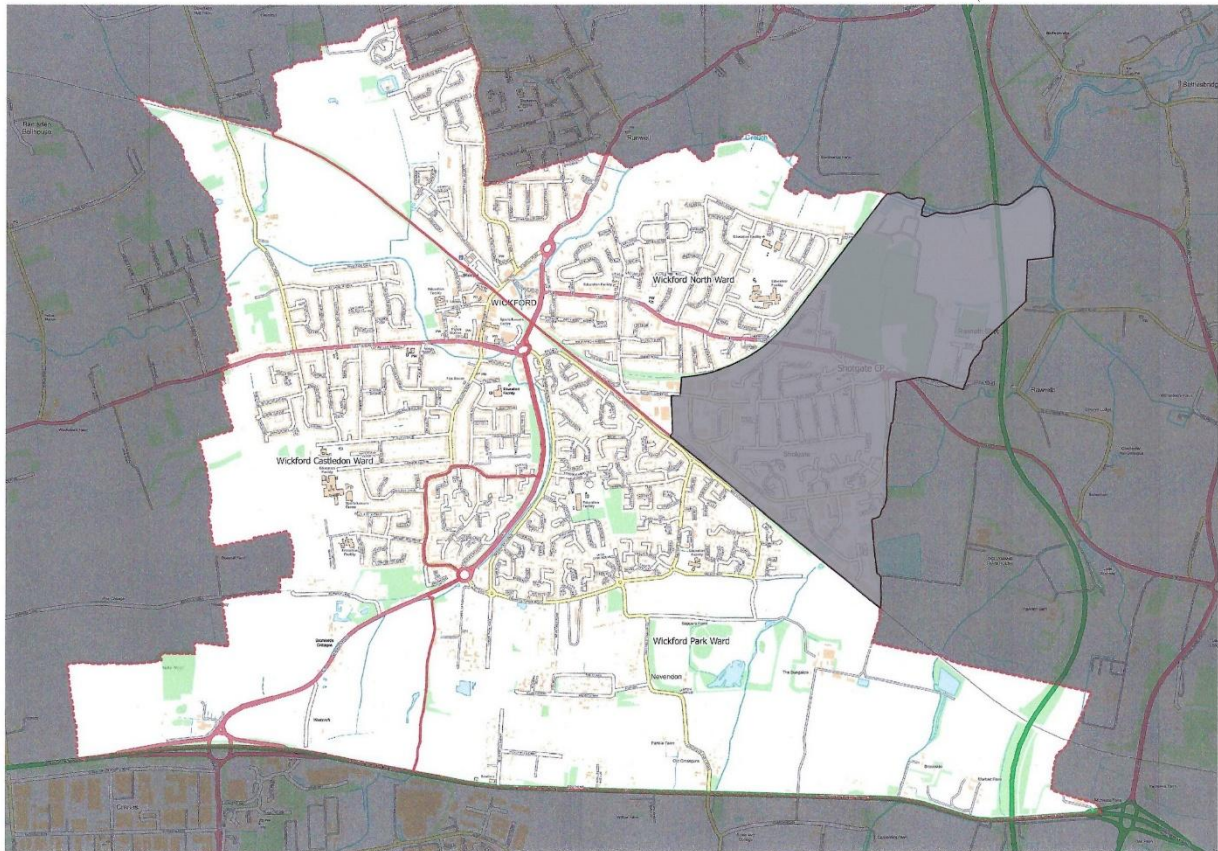
Wickford Town Council does not cover the whole of Wickford.

Historically, Wickford was a thriving agricultural community during the Victorian years and saw a lot of growth of its markets in the second half of the last century when the railway arrived in the town. Not only did this development provide new commercial possibilities but it also led to a new influx of people and industrial growth in the area.

Mission Statement

'To work with the community to improve and promote the social, economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the people of Wickford.'

Boundary Plan for Wickford



The Council

The Town Council was formed on 16 May 2022.

The Town Council levies a tax (Precept) to pay for its local services and for 2025/26 the Precept is £234,262. The Precept covers the cost of running the Council and providing services. As Wickford Town Council is a relatively new council, these services are currently being developed.

Wickford Town Council consists of 20 Councillors who are elected by its constituents in May every four years. The Council operates on a non-political party basis. The duty of its members is to carry out their roles and responsibilities in accordance with relevant legislation and the needs and wishes of the community.

A full schedule of meeting dates of Council and Committee meetings can be viewed on the Town Council's website together with current Agendas and past Minutes from Meetings. Copies of the Town Council's governance documents including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference, together with key policies can also be viewed on the Town Council's website.

www.wickfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Duties and Responsibilities

The Town Council has a range of specific powers which can be used if and when required to do so.

- The Council must do what the law requires it to do
- The Council may only do what the law says it may do
- The Council cannot do anything unless permitted by legislation

The Council has a duty to:

- Comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Equality Act 2010
- Publish annual accounts, notice of meetings, agendas and meeting notes
- Comply with the relevant Local Government Transparency Code
- Comply with employment law
- Consider the impact of decisions on reducing crime and disorder in the area
- Have regard to the protection of biodiversity in carrying out functions

The Council must:

- Appoint a Chair of the Council
- Appoint officers as appropriate to carry out its functions
- Appoint a Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to manage the Council's financial affairs
- Appoint a competent and independent internal auditor
- Adopt a Code of Conduct
- Hold a minimum of 4 meetings a year, one of which must be the Annual Town Meeting

a) Engagement and Partnership

Aim to seek community engagement through:

- Work with residents, businesses and community organisations
- Encourage people to participate in decision-making processes
- Use the views of the community as part of our decision-making process
- The Town Council is a Consultee in the planning process with Basildon Borough Council being the principal planning authority
- Engage and develop links with partner organisations and authorities such as – Basildon Borough Council, Essex County Council, Police Authority, Wickford BID
- Keep residents informed of Council business through social media, the Town Council's website, noticeboards, newsletter and local magazine, Wickford Town News
- Supporting local community by providing events throughout the year
- Annual Meetings
- Issuing an Annual Report
- Publishing a newsletter
- Councillor representation on outside organisations to ensure good communication
- Meet your Town Councillor events, enabling residents to talk to Town Councillors about issues in and around Wickford
- Support local organisations through Town Council's grants scheme
- Development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Wickford

b) Services

The list below details some of the services provided by the Town Council:

- 5 Noticeboards situated at the following:
 - Southend Road shops
 - The Wick shopping area
 - Nevendon Road shops area
 - London Road (St Peters Terrace)
 - High Street
- Community Events
- Employment of staff
 - Town Clerk (full time)
 - Admin Assistant (part time)
 - Environmental Services Operative (part time)
- Communication with local authorities and groups
- Wickford Market
- 3 Wayfinding signs in Wickford High Street
- 2 accessible benches at Nevendon Recreation Ground and Wickford Memorial park
- Wickford branded litter bins around the town
- Railway Underpass Display Boards – currently housing local artwork
- Festive lighting in the High Street including a real Christmas Tree
- Blue Plaque scheme
- Allotments
- Subsidised car parking

c) Other work of the Town Council

Monitoring and Reporting:

- Consultee in the planning process
- Road and utility works (Essex County Council and Utility companies)
- Street Lighting (Essex County Council)
- Footpaths and Verges (Essex County Council)
- Potholes and Pavement maintenance (Essex County Council)
- Fly tipping & Graffiti removal (Basildon Borough Council)

d) Achievements

Wickford Town Council continues to organise and manage various events throughout the year for the benefit of residents. During the last 12 months, the following achievements were made:

- Easter egg hunt April 2025
- Annual Town Meeting held on 24 April 2025
- VE Day Beacon lighting and parade held in Wickford Memorial Park in May 2025
- VE Day afternoon tea held at the Wick Community Centre in May 2025
- Music event held at Wickford Memorial Park July 2025
- Summer Fun held in May, July and August at Wickford Memorial Park – free event
- Bar n Bus Teenage events held during the school summer holidays
- Attendance at Annual Remembrance Parade – November 2025
- Entrance to Christmas Tree Festival at Christ Church – November 2025
- Provided Christmas lights in the High Street for 2025
- Christmas lights switch on – 22 November 2025
- Senior Citizens Christmas buffet lunch 5 December 2025
- Bulb and Tree Planting
 - Over 45,000 bulbs planted around Wickford over the last 3 years
 - 200 shrubs planted to encourage community involvement and environmental awareness
 - Tree planting in Radwinter Avenue and Barnhall Recreation Ground
 - Tree donation to St Andrews Church, London Road
 - Working in partnership with Roots Together initiative on Wick Green with the planting of 8 mature cherry trees and the creation of a wildflower meadow, complemented by 3,000 daffodil bulbs
- Redesigning and landscaping of the roundabout at Nevendon Road/Cranfield Park Road junction November 2025, with 12 new trees planted along with flowers and bulbs, creating an attractive and welcoming gateway into the town
- Wickford Market held in the High Street on various days
- Grant funding for community groups
- Wickford dedicated Community Safety Officers (started October 2025)
- Employment of a part time Environmental Services Operative
- Foundation and Silver Awards in the Local Council Award Scheme

e) Planned Projects for 2026/2027

- Continued Development of Wickford Market
- Recruitment of Community Special Constables
- Installation a new path to link Wickford Memorial Park to Battlesbridge (working with Basildon Borough Council)
- New concrete planters in Tresco Way
- Improvements to the Market Square to create an open space
- Takeover allotment sites
- Part time Youth Worker (provided by the Bar n Bus)

Public Realm Improvements including:

- Repair/replacement of the High Street railings
- Street furniture (bollards and benches)
- Improve pedestrian access to the High Street (working with the Wickford Area Committee)
- Nevendon Park skate park improvements (working with Basildon Borough Council)
- Tree and Bulb planting
 - ✓ Wick Green planting project (working with Basildon Borough Council) which includes: 12 cherry trees, wildflower meadow planting
 - ✓ 150 whips to be planted around Wickford

Planned Events:

- Afternoon tea - June
- Summer Fun during the school summer holidays at Wickford Memorial Park
- Music event – July
- Teenage summer activities
- Youth event - September
- Christmas lights switch on – November - TBC
- Senior Citizens Christmas buffet lunch – December
- Wickford Market High Street markets
- Evening entertainment in 'The Square'

Strategic Plan - Key Themes and Priorities

Key Issues

The Town Council has identified the following key strategic issues where it will focus its efforts on behalf of the community:

- Planning, including Neighbourhood Plan, community facilities and infrastructure
- Partnership working
 - Working with the Wickford BID (Business Improvement District)
 - Wickford Town Centre Task Group
 - Wickford Area Committee
- Community engagement and events
- Street cleansing
- Public Realm Improvement
- Promotion of the town, including High Street protection and regeneration
- Improving communication and input into the decision-making
- Sourcing of additional funding and identify income streams

Priority	Current Actions	Planned Actions
Neighbourhood Plan	Commenced September 2023	To be completed in line with Basildon Borough Council's Local Plan
Infrastructure	Travel Transport – bus and train Cycling routes Car parking	Engage with ECC Transport Forum Liaising with the relevant bus companies to re-route the bus routes from the High Street to the ring road
Partnership working	Working with community groups and organisations to deliver events and projects Liaising with Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council to support services provided by both authorities Wickford BID	To encourage more co-operation in the community through the development of community events To expand co-operation with other Town and Parish Councils in the surrounding areas Liaise with Basildon Borough Council arboriculturist to plant trees and bulbs To support their endeavours to improve the High Street

Community engagement and events	Organising community events on a regular basis Communicating by holding an Annual Town Meeting, Meet your Town Councillor, contributing to the local magazine – Wickford Town News Council website and social media used for information sharing Publish a regular newsletter to keep residents informed of Town Council activities	Pursue hard to reach groups by better publicising Council work in the community Planned events for 2026: • Afternoon Tea • Summer Fun • Music event • Teenage summer activities • Youth event • Christmas lights switch on • Senior citizens Christmas buffet lunch • Wickford Market High Street markets • Evening entertainment in 'The Square'
Street cleansing	Continue to work with Basildon Borough Council for regular street cleaning	Use of Pride Teams in targeted areas Repair/replace old and damaged street furniture, including bins and seats Repair/replace railings in the High Street Employ Town Council's own Environmental Services Operative
Promotion of the town	Raising profile of the town via community events, social media and website Publish a newsletter	Develop town branding Continue to develop Wickford Market Liaising with bus companies for the permanent closure of the High Street on a Saturday
Business Forum for Wickford	A representative on the Wickford BID	Support and promote Wickford BID initiatives
Improving communication and input into the decision-making	Joining Committees Working together	More information to be made available on the Town Council's website and Wickford Town News Production of a newsletter Liaise with Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council
Sourcing of additional funding and identify income streams		Secure funding for development of Neighbourhood Plan Additional income streams to be identified

Monitoring and Review

This is a living document which means the budget, themes and priorities may change during the four-year period.

The Plan is a statement of the Town Council's intentions over the next four years and will be subject to at least an annual review.

Elements of the Plan will be controlled through Council meetings held throughout the year.

This will ensure that the Plan is carefully monitored and that it aligns with the aspirations of the Town Council.

Review Date:	12/1/2026
Minute ref	FR26-245