

WICKFORD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Held at Wickford Primary School, Wickford
on **THURSDAY 24 April 2025 at 7.00pm**

Present:

Town Councillors

Chair: Councillor Derek Harrison

Vice Chair: Councillor Graham Bradley

Councillor A Ball

Councillor C Gregory

Councillor S Mott

Councillor A Read

Councillor G Ellis

Councillor N Hoad

Councillor A Neil

Councillor J Speller

Councillor L Gann

Councillor S Marshall

Councillor G Randall

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

Deputy Leader of Basildon Borough Council, Councillor Adele Brown

Town Clerk, Mrs T Melhuish

Members of the Public - 18

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were provided by Councillor K Oakes, S Oakes and Parmenter.

2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting 17 May 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Annual Town Meeting held on 17 May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Guest Speakers

Mark Francois, MP for Rayleigh and Wickford

Mr Francois reported on the following:

- i. Basildon Borough Council's Local Plan, Regulation 18 has been produced with outline comments being made, concerns with the lack of infrastructure for any future large development within and around the town
- ii. Wickford Station – funds have been secured for the redevelopment, work due to start in the summer and completed by end of 2026
- iii. Construction of a new special needs school – 2 sites, in Rayleigh and South Woodham Ferrers



- iv. Wickford High Street
Wickford BID – local traders working together to improve the High Street
New McDonalds to open in the summer
Old Co-op site – new deal with a local supermarket, new planning application has been submitted

Mr Francois received questions on the following topics – new supermarket, Anglian Water, sewerage

Deputy Leader, Basildon Borough Council, Councillor A Brown

Councillor Brown reported on the following:

- i. New supermarket – the planning application has been received and is being considered, there will be a Section 106 agreement
- ii. Local Plan Regulation 18, land development to identify sites. The next step will be to look at the infrastructure

Councillor Brown received questions on the Local Plan – various issues with sites, Section 106 agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy, GP surgeries

- iii. Weekly refuse collections – return of service
- iv. Regeneration of Basildon town centre
- v. Area Committees will spend money locally, how to best benefit Wickford

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

4. To receive the Annual Report 2023-24

- a. Environment and Leisure Committee – Councillor Neil

Councillor Neil provided a verbal report on the past year's work of the Committee:

- New street furniture, wayfinding signs to be installed in the High Steet, employment of an Environmental Services Operative, replanting of the roundabout in Nevendon Road, Christmas lights, support for hanging baskets and floral displays, tree planting and events
- b. Finance and Resources Committee – Councillor Hoad

Councillor Hoad provided a verbal report on the past year's work of the Committee:

- Policy reviews, new Town Council office, grants scheme, new shop frontage scheme, Forward Plan, Town Council assets
- c. Market Committee – Councillor Bradley

Councillor Bradley provided a verbal report on the past year's work of the Committee:

- Lease from Basildon Borough Council, new Market from 6 July 2024, High Street market days held,
- d. Planning and Infrastructure Committee

Councillor Ball provided a verbal report on the past year's work of the Committee:

- 77 planning applications considered by the Committee Chair and Vice Chair, under delegated authority, 53 planning applications considered by the Committee
- Railway bridge underpass artwork project, Community Speedwatch group,



Neighbourhood Plan, Wickford High Street survey, parking,

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

5. Questions from Residents

- i. Developments identified in the Local Plan will affect hospitals, will there be an increase in hospital services?

Answer: there has been no proposals in the Local Plan to expand the hospitals.

- ii. Local Government Re-organisation, what affect will this have?

Answer: there will be no effect for the Town Council. Councillor Brown reported that the Essex County Council elections for May had been postponed. In 2026, there will be an election for a Mayor of Essex. Current consultations on Unitary Councils and the Government will make the final decision.

- iii. Questions were received on the following – Welcome to Wickford sign, bleed bags, knife crime bin, working telephone boxes,

Answer: all being looked into

- iv. What is happening with the old police station?

Answer: this is owned by Basildon Borough Council and will be open in September as a Community Safety Hub.

- v. Will there be a Community Governance Review?

Answer: not as far as the Town Council is aware

The Chair thanked the speakers, 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 8.50 pm.

Signed Chair Councillor A Neil

Date: 30 April 2026

