



# Billericay District Residents' Association



Incorporating **Billericay Action Group**

[www.bdra.org](http://www.bdra.org)

[www.billericayactiongroup.org.uk](http://www.billericayactiongroup.org.uk)

Held:	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 - Emmanuel Hall, Billericay
Attendance:	Recorded as 27
Agenda Prepared by:	Viv Burling
Minutes Taken by:	Viv Burling

## 1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chair, Keith Bailey welcomed everyone to the 97<sup>th</sup> AGM of the BDRA, with a special welcome to Kevin Geeson of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance.

## 2. Guest Speaker – Kevin Geeson

Kevin presented his talk speaking about the funding of E&HAA and the makeup of the crews.

## 3. Questions and Answers

There were lots of interesting questions from the audience at the end of the talk, which Kevin was able to answer. The Chair thanked Kevin for his talk and he left the meeting.

*Formal business of the AGM commenced.*

## 4. Apologies for Absence.

Andy Wilson, Gordon Shand, Kathy and Martyn Heald and Shelia Pullin.

## 5. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were accepted as a true and complete record of the meeting.

## 6. Matters Arising

None

## 7. Chair's report

KB began by extending a warm welcome to everyone, to the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Billericay District Residents Association, and went on:-

Apart from my own appointment as the new Chair we have had a number of other changes on the Committee over the past year; We have been very lucky to recruit Lisa Ronchetti a very capable Editor with lots of experience in media and I'm sure you will all have noticed the improvement in The Resident in both layout and content. Well done Lisa.

Also, at the start of the year Trevor Leach took over as the Treasurer and again got to grips with the accounts; unfortunately, he is soon to move away from the area and has to give up this position. I for one will really miss his knowledge of the of the rounds and volunteers. But once again we have been very fortunate to have Susan Harrington, who is well-qualified for the position, step forward to take up the challenge of keeping our finances in order.

We also had a new Chair of the Joint Area Committee in Tony Beard who has continued to deal with the day-to-day issues such as planning applications.

We have created a new position, in Gordon Shand who has the grand title of Membership Database Secretary which as the title suggests means he keeps up to date all membership details, delivery rounds, and subscriptions. In doing so he is able to report on the Exe Co on a regular basis on all these issues, apart from being another voice at Committee meetings.

The big issue that has occupied us over the last few years has been the Local Plan, having seen off the first incarnation last year we have been waiting to see what the Borough Council will come up with next and I must extend my thanks to Andy Wilson for his continued monitoring of the council's progress and his regular updating not only of the BDRA Committee but all our members through his clear reports in the Resident. I need to remind you that Basildon Council will be debating the local plan consultation tomorrow evening (25<sup>th</sup>) and if approved it is scheduled to start 27<sup>th</sup> June for 10 weeks to 5<sup>th</sup> September. We will be putting an article in the July Resident encouraging you all to get involved in that consultation.

We have off course kept up with our usual sponsorship and charity donations either by way of cash donations or free adverts in the Resident and our 'Dates for your Diary' page. We were given £500 by the Billericay Society when they

ceased to exist and we decided to pass it on to another good cause by paying for a wheelchair friendly picnic table in a new area being developed in Lake Meadows.

We also canvassed the Council about the amount of rubbish generated by the Kentucky Fried Chicken Shop in the High Street which resulted in the new rubbish bin outside the premises, and a review of the emptying schedule of the existing bins.

We recently asked for any ideas from the membership as to what we should concentrate on while waiting for developments in the Local plan. The overwhelming response was potholes which is very understandable. This of course involves all councils, County, Borough and Town so a lot of work is needed but I think we are up for the challenge.

Before I close, I have to thank all the volunteers whether they be involved in the delivery of The Resident, or working on the Committees. A special mention goes to Yvonne and Kathleen who organise the Coach trips which I am sure many of you enjoy and one last thank you must go to Michael Yates our Web master who has worked very hard to get a new website up and running following difficulties we had in keeping our previous one updated. Our new website can be continuously updated making it more useful and meaningful.

My first Chair Report, and I will close by making a plea to all our members to consider if you or someone you know would be interested in getting involved in one of the many volunteer roles within the BDRA. We need volunteers without whom we would not exist. To say thank you to our volunteers we are arranging a "thank you" get together so they can meet other volunteers and the Committee can show their appreciation for all their hard work. So, if you are a volunteer, you will be receiving something in the next few weeks to register your interest.

## **8. Vice Chair's Report – Local Plan** *(Stephen Chapman reading a report produced by Andy Wilson)*

A quick recap on the history

As many of you will know, after 8 years of work the emerging Local Plan was withdrawn in March last year. It was a bad plan that would have seen around 3,000 houses built on 9 major sites all in the Green Belt around Billericay over the next 12 years or so. Such a rapid increase in the population would have put huge pressure on already stretched services and there was little guarantee that the infrastructure would have been adequately improved in line with house building. It was a bold move by the Basildon Council administration to withdraw the plan, but we believe it was the right decision.

However, it leaves the borough open to speculative development in the meantime until a new Local Plan is adopted. It was a known risk and unfortunately, we have seen 2 developments approved on appeal, on Southend Road and Kennel Lane, by the Planning Inspector despite being refused by our Borough Councillors. The fact that those Councillors are prepared to continue to reject Green Belt planning applications, such as one recently on Dunton Road for nearly 270 houses, should be applauded. But we should not be surprised if we see more appeals as a result.

It must be recognised that we need a new Local Plan as it will provide a degree of certainty over where development can, and cannot, take place over a 15-year period. The Local Plan is where the Green Belt is defined and through that plan it protects such land from future development. We must also accept that all parts of the borough must play its part in delivering houses for our future generations, but they should be distributed to where there is most housing need and where the development can be best sustained. We all need to acknowledge the importance of having a Local Plan and do all we can to ensure that the next version is good for our existing communities, our environment and delivers the right type of houses specifically for first time buyers, young families, and the elderly.

So what happens now?

By withdrawing the last version, Basildon Borough Council has in effect had to start from scratch on a new Local Plan and that work started last year. They are not simply dusting off the old version and trying again. They have gone back to basics as much of the previous supporting evidence is now more than 10 years out of date. The current expectation is that the new Local Plan will cover the 15 -year period from 2027 to 2042 so the next 4 years are going to be critical while that new plan is created. It gives us a chance to influence the outcome. The good news is that the council wants to engage local residents in the process at an early stage and the first step was to hold an introductory residents' forum with representative bodies and individuals, earlier this year. The BDRA and BAG were involved but there has been no feedback to date.

But by far the most important step will be an Issues & Option Public Consultation that is likely to start in June. This is a formal part of the process that will give local people the opportunity to say what they would like to see in the new Local Plan. We won't see any fine detail at this stage, such as housing numbers or any building locations, but it will set wide themes on what could be acceptable, or not. The fine detail will come next year when the first draft Local Plan is published. There will be a further public consultation at that time. From our perspective there are two core matters that we must encourage the Council to get right from the outset. Firstly, they must build the new Local Plan on the right housing target based on good evidence of the real housing need. Previously they went with the maximum number of projected houses leading directly to Green Belt loss. We believe the figure this time should be significantly lower which will remove pressure on needing development in the Green Belt.

Secondly, that the Council must use the existing Green Belt as a valid and recognised constraint to development. Sadly, this was not the case last time, but the planning system allows them to do this even if it reduces the overall housing target. We are encouraged that the current Basildon Council administration is thinking along these lines too and is prepared to deliver a plan with a more appropriate housing target and better Green Belt protection. They plan to advise the Secretary of State of their intentions. We believe that the right housing number, with good use of brownfield sites first as the planning system dictates, could result in little need to consider the Green Belt for development, or certainly not on the excessive scale seen before. But still deliver enough houses for the borough's needs until 2042.

But only time will tell. There is still a lot of work to do but we must all play a part in this by responding to the public consultation next month to help shape the Local Plan, and the borough's future. As before, we will provide as much help as we can in this regard to ensure we send a big signal to Basildon council from the residents of Billericay on what we are willing to accept in the next Local Plan, and what we are not!

## 9. Treasurer's Report

### FINANCIAL RESULTS

<b>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>For the years ending January 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Revenue &amp; Sales</b>		
Subscriptions	£11,992	£6,271
Advertising	10,877	8,012
Coach Trips	15,821	5,394
<b>Total revenue Sales</b>	<b>£38,690</b>	<b>£19,677</b>
<b>Costs</b>		
Magazine	£17,524	£12,278
Coach trips	13,806	4,709
Total Costs	£31,330	£16,987
<b>Gross Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>£7,360</b>	<b>£2,690</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Interest (Net)	£20	£29
Other income	100	502
Total other income	£120	£531
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Admin & Misc expenses	£2,634	£3,664
Donations & Sponsorship	1,087	700
Total other expenses	£3,721	£4,364
<b>Net surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>£3,759</b>	<b>£(1,143)</b>

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>		
	<b>Jan31st 2023</b>	<b>Jan31st 2022</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	£54,337	£56,082
Debtors, Receivables & Pre payments	240	803
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>£54,557</b>	<b>£56,885</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors, Payables & Accruals	£7,097	£13,164
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>£7,097</b>	<b>£13,164</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>		
<b>Accumulated fund</b>	<b>£47,480</b>	<b>£43,721</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Reserves</b>	<b>£54,557</b>	<b>£56,885</b>

I have examined the financial records and accounts of the Billericay District Residents' Association for the year ended January 31st. 2023.

I have found that proper accounting records have been kept, and that the financial statements accord with the records, and reflect generally accepted accounting principles and practice.

An electronic copy of the full financial report is available to members on request.

#### **COMMENTARY**

With the end of the Covid-19 pandemic BDRA's activities in 2022, showed an upturn, in the financial results.

- ✓ All 10 planned editions of The Resident for the year were published.
- ✓ There were 13 planned coach trips for the year, of which 11 took place.
- ✓ With the return to the normal issue of magazines, there was a full collection of subscription revenue for the year.

Membership stands at around 4,250 households.

The down side of back to normal was that the increased expenses directly attributed to magazine and coach trips, partly due to price increases. Despite the increased expenses, a surplus of £7,360 was recorded in 2022. There was not any major expenditures during the year.

The balance sheet remains strong, with available reserves of £47,480 at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. This is preserved at a high level, representing a long standing "fighting fund" for potential outlay on legal and consultancy services to support the campaign against the Basildon Local Plan.

Trevor Leach asked for confirmation that those present were happy to continue with P Dove as the independent Examiner. This was agreed.

### **10. Motions**

The Exe Co Secretary (VB) referred to Appendix 3 in the pack relating to proposed amendments to the Constitution. It was explained that the first amendment was 'housekeeping' only. It had been agreed on the 24th June 2021 that the title of Chairman and Vice Chairman would be changed to Chair and Vice Chair to make them non gender specific. The Constitution was not changed at this stage as no other changes were necessary. This has now been done as we are making other changes.

The change required now is a new section, 7e, which will read: -

'All funds held by the BDRA will be used solely for the good of the membership and the residents of Billericay and for no other purpose. The Exe Co reserves the right to reward exceptional service'.

VB asked if there were any comments or objections to these changes. None were made the motions were passed.

### **11. Nomination of Officers- Executive and Joint Area Committee 23-24**

The Exe Co Secretary asked those present to agree to the nomination for officers as set out in the AGM pack as follows: -

Executive Committee	Chair Vice Chair Treasurer Secretary Editor	Keith Bailey Stephen Chapman Susan Harrington Viv Burling Lisa Ronchetti
Billericay Action Group	Chair	Andy Wilson
Joint Area Committee	Chair Vice Chair Secretary	Tony Beard Eve Oliver Marian Jones

Those present agreed to the positions as detailed above.

### **12. Any Other Business- including questions and answers from the floor.**

- Marian Jones asked about the promotional material and if it was going to be circulated again, agreed that it was. Also, a question relating to the insurance cover for volunteers. MJ was requested to put the question in an email and Stephen Chapman would respond.
- Peter Sharp asked if the subscriptions were going to be increased, KB responded not at this stage.
- Mike Andrews, wanted to build on Andy Wilson's report re planning. At the moment the Councillors were supportive of preventing development on Green Belt, as in the Dunton Road development. The Planning Officer was supportive of building a lot of houses and had told developers to appeal against the Councillors' decision to refuse planning. It is very important that people respond to the Consultation. There was no idea what the Consultation would look like but based on previous similar questionnaires, only simply responses were required that would lead you down a particular path. It was important that full responses were given where there was the

opportunity. We were constrained in getting the message out there as The Resident only came out once a month. If you were not already doing so you should follow the fb page 'Save Billericay from Housing Developments', which had a lot more detail about individual planning application. It was not clear at this stage in what form the responses would need to be. BAG would be giving guidance on the kind of responses residents should make, but it needed to be in your own words

### **13. Chair's Closing Remarks**

Keith thanked those present for coming and advised that tea and biscuits were now being served.

DRAFT