

# BRAINTREE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

*Supporting parish and town councils in the District of Braintree*

**Newsletter 5 – February 2023** (Note: click or control+click on [blue underlined](#) links to see more)

## **Management:**

Your Executive Committee continues to meet regularly, making use of Zoom to save on travelling time and expense. For the quarterly meetings, we operate hybrid sessions via face-to-face and Zoom.

## **Points from meetings:**

### 7th September 2022 (Executive)

The Local Highways Panel meeting had been attended but it was disappointing to note how much improvement and repair work was needed, the lack of funds and the long delays before anything happened. There were mixed views on the “20’s Plenty” speed reduction campaign but it was agreed to see if the LHP could be persuaded to consider the merits of the scheme. It was also agreed to ask the LHP to pay the expenses of the BALC representatives in attending LHP meetings as District and County Members were reimbursed.

### 19th October 2022 (Quarterly)

This was a hybrid meeting in Witham where we heard from Roger Hirst (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex) and his Deputy Jane Gardiner. The minutes for this have been circulated and are on the BALC website.

Community safety is not something to be tackled on its own and those attending were encouraged to find ways to work with other agencies where their local knowledge and contacts could add depth and strength.



### 4th January 2023 (Executive)

As the Executive is not a legal entity, its members have personal responsibility for claims against it. They are not covered by their own Council's insurance for employer's and public liability (or any other claim), and so it was agreed to take out an appropriate policy, at the same time exploring other avenues.

Following the resignation of Dave Gronland (Halstead TC) from the LHP, it was agreed to seek a replacement at our forthcoming Quarterly Meeting.

A report of the November meeting of the ECC [Community Initiative Fund](#) heard that applications amounted to £749,000 with only £300,000 available. The fund for this year is now closed to new applications. Our member councils are reminded that there are numerous grant-making bodies and in many cases they can access these funds when district and county councils can't. It pays to read and understand what each body's criteria are and to tailor applications so that it is obvious that what is being applied for as far as possible is an excellent match with the criteria. It is understood that EALC has recruited an adviser on what funding exists and for what. Usually grants support a capital project rather than underwriting running costs.



### Financial planning for 2023-23 (continued from last Newsletter)

BDC are proposing to cut street cleaning agreements by 33%. When this was challenged by one of our members at the meeting when this was discussed, the Leader's response was that BDC need to find £2m to balance their budget, that parishes wanting more will have to fund it themselves, and anyway parish and town councils are not capped and are holding "lots of money" in reserves. It does appear to be a "done deal".

### 18th January 2023 (Quarterly)

Our guest speaker (in person) was the Chief Constable of Essex Police, B J Harrington KPM (left in the photo with Roger Hirst). We also welcomed Chief Superintendent Claire Talbot, Inspector Phil Jackson and Sergeant S Muggeridge.



The Chief Constable made many points as noted in the minutes that have been circulated. Recruiting more officers is progressing but many earlier concerns such as domestic abuse continue to absorb much police time. He wants the public to have more confidence in the police, and vetting has improved with many unsuitable (or worse) officers dismissed.

The main conclusion to be drawn is that the public need to report by 101/999/live chat everything that concerns them so that the police can put the pieces of the jigsaw together to understand what is actually happening. In many cases wrong-doing follows a pattern of time and place that is predictable, but is not in fact predicted. In their turn, the police need to get better at reporting back to councils and the public so that they know what has been done and the outcome. As an example, no feed back had been received about the incidents in Kelvedon mentioned at the meeting with Roger Hirst last October and it was reported that the incidents had not ceased.

[Note: reporting to the police can also be via [Crimestoppers](#) or [action fraud/03001232040](#)].

### **Business as usual**

#### Planning matters

As BDC can't demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land, BDC is often failing (on advice) to defend when refusals are appealed and they feel that the appeal will be allowed. Councils are encouraged to ensure that their concerns are communicated to the Planning Inspectorate and for larger cases to seek a local hearing, which includes providing advice to the Inspector as to conditions and any S106 agreement or unilateral undertaking.

#### Local Highways Panel

Garry Warren (Halstead TC) was elected to replace Dave Gronland (Halstead).

#### Community Safety grants



### **£333k AVAILABLE TO HELP SUPPORT COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECTS ACROSS ESSEX**

Voluntary and community safety groups from across Essex are being urged to apply for a

funding boost from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex's Community Safety Development Fund.

The £333,000 fund offers grants of up to £20,000 for community projects that help to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Essex, as well as supporting vulnerable people.

Applications to the fund have to demonstrate that they will make a positive impact on at least one of the **Police and Crime Plan priorities**.

Applications close on the 17 February 2023. To find out more about the fund and how to apply please visit: [Community Grants - Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner \(pfcc.police.uk\)](https://pfcc.police.uk)

### NHS updates

It's common experience that the natural reaction to illness or injury is to "reach for your GP", but early appointments are hard to get. A preliminary "triage" is often offered or required which can result in a more direct access to the right person or service. This is increasingly highlighting the wide role of pharmacists and other professionals such as social prescribers. We can already make appointments for eye and hearing tests and this is an extension of that idea. We can [help ourselves](#) but using the NHS you need a knowledge of how it is organised and how to [navigate it](#), this being one example. Another is [self-referring](#) for common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression.

Our councils can help using all our means of communication to residents to spread this knowledge.

For Mid and South Essex ICS (which includes the Braintree District), councillors can receive regular updates on performance and progress such as this on [27th January 2023](#), and can attend quarterly councillor briefing meetings (on MS Teams) with the ICS top management by request to [maximilian.daniels@nhs.net](mailto:maximilian.daniels@nhs.net).

### **Your views?**

Write in to our [clerk](#) if there are topics you feel we should cover.