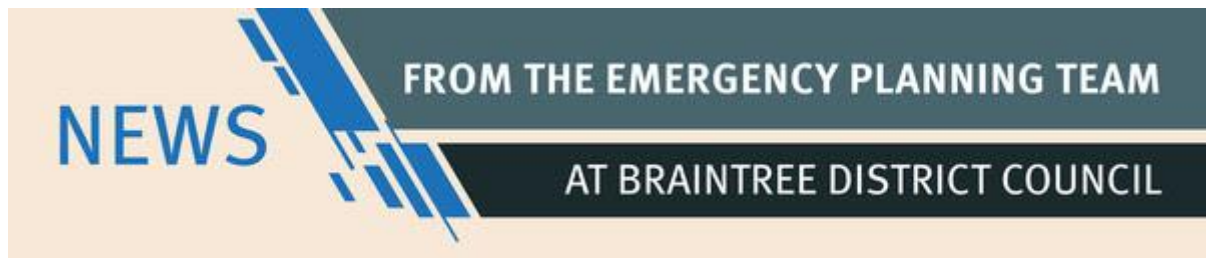


BDC information for May 2022 meeting



Thank you to you all



We wanted to say a huge thank you to all those in the Braintree district who have come together to help others and show support during the recent Storm Eunice and the situation in Ukraine.

We know so many of our residents are keen to continue supporting the victims in Ukraine and you can support the national appeals through the Red Cross and the Disasters Emergency Committee.

[Find out more](#)

Local emergency information and advice



Prepare but don't panic! Emergencies are unlikely but they can happen, and with a few small steps you can prepare for the unexpected.

The [Essex Resilience Forum](#) is a good online tool with things to do to help you prepare.

[Visit their website](#)

How to be prepared for a power cut



Power cuts don't happen very often, but sometimes they happen unexpectedly.

It's worth being prepared if this does happen to you, so here's some useful advice to help:

- Call 105 free of charge - they'll put you through to your local network operator who can give you help and advice
- Check your trip switch. If it's still on, call UK Power Networks or visit their [website](#) to see if they are aware of a power cut at your address. If the trip switch is off, try switching it

back on. If it switches off again, one of your appliances may be faulty, so unplug all appliances and then reset the trip switch

- Sign up to [UK Power Network's Priority Services Register](#) if you or someone you know needs extra support or additional care
- Consider an [emergency home kit](#) with things such as a torch, radio, first aid kit, water, toiletries, tinned or packed food, spare batteries etc
- if your fridge or freezer has not been working for more than four hours, throw away the food inside, throw away ice cream if it has gone soft and meat and fish that are still below 8°C can be cooked and refrozen, or cooked and eaten

More food safety advice can be found [here](#).

How you can volunteer in your community

Volunteering is crucial to better preparedness and community resilience.

Over the past two years we've seen how much volunteering can have a positive impact on the community during times of need.

[Find and sign-up with an organisation near you](#)

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New Locate venture launched



www.locatebraintreedistrict.co.uk

We've created a new website which promotes our district to new businesses, residents and visitors.

The new site Locate Braintree District outlines the reasons why businesses should invest, people should live in and visitors should visit our district.

The platform also showcases our investments and the innovative projects setting up home in our district, and the aim of the initiative is to attract investment into the area from outside.

[Find out more](#)

Our Chairman hosts civic reception to raise money for local charities



Our Chairman Cllr Sue Wilson hosted a civic reception last week at Rivenhall Oaks Golf Centre in Witham, raising money for local charities in the Braintree district.

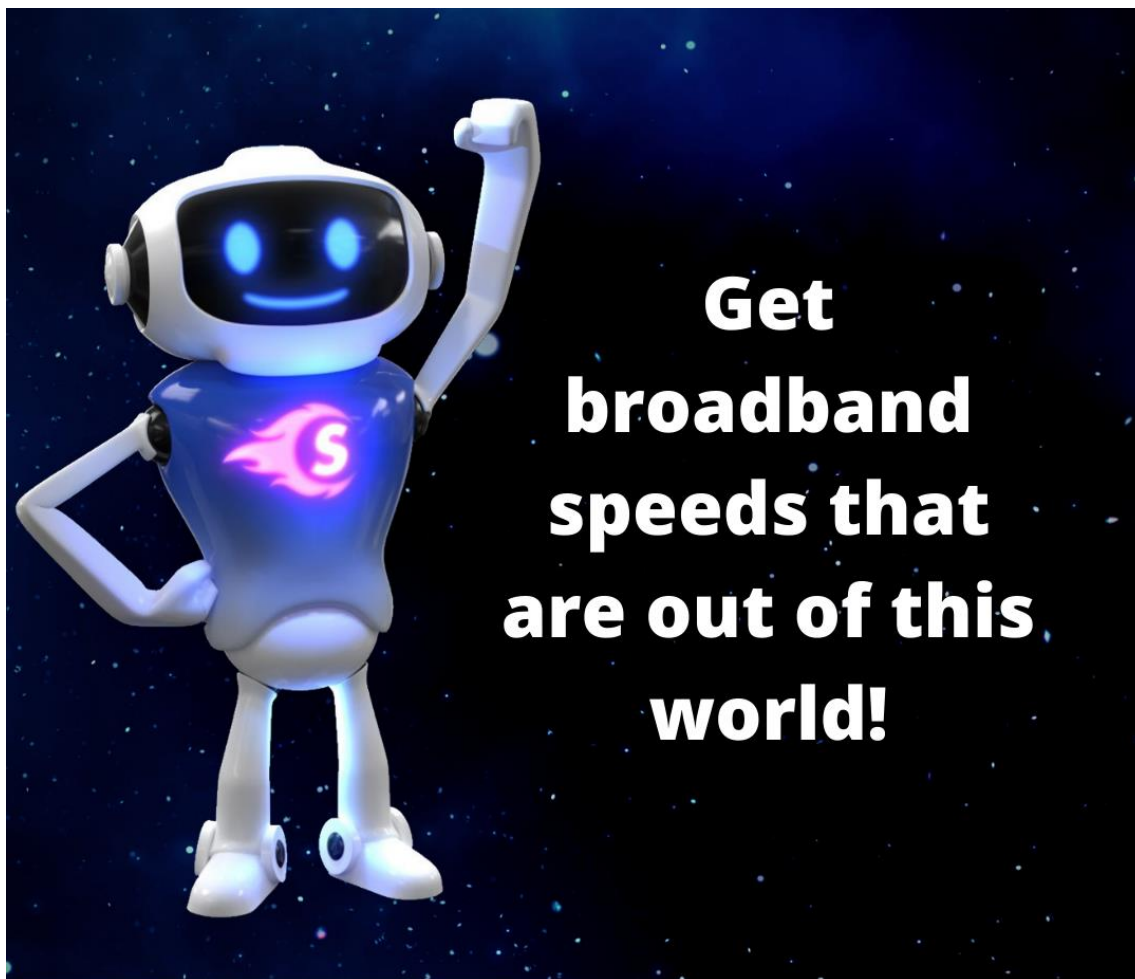
The event was held in aid of Cllr Wilson's three chosen charities: Colne Valley Railway Preservation based in Castle Hedingham, Friends of Flich Way in Braintree and Home-Start Essex. Local businesses and community groups she has visited during her civic year from across the district were invited to the free reception which involved adventure golf, as a way of thanking them for their work and contribution to the district.

Money raised will be added to the charity fund to be presented to the charities at the end of the civic year next month.

If you're interested in inviting our Chairman for any events you have organised in the district, they would be more than happy to come along and support.

[Invite our Chairman](#)

Faster internet services are coming to our district



Thanks to Essex County Council's broadband improvement programme, Superfast Essex, residents and businesses in our district are able to benefit from faster internet speed.

We are working with Essex County Council to roll out ultrafast broadband and are proud to offer download speeds of up to 1Gbps through fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) technology.

This technology is already available to more than a quarter of premises across our district, as a result of the work of the Superfast Essex programme and commercial (non-state funded) rollouts. This is due to increase, in line with the government's ambition for gigabit-capable broadband to be available nationwide by 2030.

You can visit Superfast Essex's [interactive map](#) to find out your broadband status, and if you can already access a full fibre service, contact your internet service provider as you may need to upgrade their contract to access faster, gigabit-capable speeds.

[Find out more](#)

Covid-19 Update



It is not too late to get your Covid-19 vaccine.

Check out the [walk-in vaccination clinics](#) near you or book an appointment [online](#).

Christ Church Clinic in Braintree offers a walk-in vaccination clinic every Monday, Tuesday or Thursday from 10am to 1pm or 3pm to 6pm.

From this week, people aged 75 and over, and people aged 12 and over who are immunosuppressed, are now eligible for a Spring Covid-19 booster vaccine.

The NHS will contact eligible people to book their next vital vaccination.

[Find out more](#)

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Councils working together to support Ukrainian arrivals



Cornerstone Church in Black Notley, who joined residents in crocheting and knitting this display of solidarity for Ukraine and its residents. Photo credit: The Coffee House, Witham Road, Braintree via Instagram

At a Full Council meeting on Monday, 28 March, all four political Group Leaders at our council expressed their support for the people of Ukraine and are ready to work with partner agencies to provide support to those affected by the war.

We are working alongside partners, including Essex County Council, to provide support to those arriving under the [Homes for Ukraine](#) scheme, a scheme that invites residents to apply to sponsor a named Ukrainian and their immediate family to come over to the UK, as long as they can provide accommodation for at least six months.

We will be supporting the home check process through home visits, which will work alongside the DBS and safeguarding checks to provide assurance for sponsors and guests.

We have also worked with ECC to put together local welcome packs for sponsors and their guests, highlighting the wide range of support available in the Braintree district and across Essex, including mental health support, help with finances and benefits, applying for school places and accessing NHS services. Updates will be provided via the [Essex County Council website](#) and we will continue to keep our dedicated web page updated at www.braintree.gov.uk/ukraine.

Share our Facebook post here onto your own

channels: <https://www.facebook.com/braintreedistrictcouncil/posts/339677828190606>

Chairman visits Incredible Edible group in Earls Colne



Last week our Chairman Cllr Sue Wilson visited members of the Incredible Edible community project in Earls Colne. This community group have set themselves the target to bring the community closer together, boost health and well-being, help the environment and tackle climate change.

During the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 residents in Earls Colne started a community garden along the High Street using an unused plot of land. The group were inspired by the international Incredible Edible movement who encourage community groups to work together to grow vegetables, herbs and fruits and flowers for the benefit of local people, wildlife and the environment.

Thanks to our very generous [Councillor Community Grant scheme](#) this group were awarded £500, with which to buy a small amount of supplies to start the group.

Our Chairman is happy to visit and support local businesses and community groups. You can apply for the Chairman to come to your group or event by using the button below.

[Invite our chairman](#)

Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations



There will be a range of exciting events and activities happening across the district to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Communities, families and friends will be coming together to celebrate this important occasion and enjoy spending time together.

We know many of our residents will be celebrating, and there's many parish and town councils who are holding their own events too.

Please submit your own events to our [Visit Braintree District website](#) and we will make sure they are added to our [dedicated web page](#) which details all the events happening across the district.

Beacon-lighting ceremonies

If you or any community groups you are aware of are planning a beacon-lighting ceremony, please let us know by emailing civic@braintree.gov.uk and we can add it to our events web page and provide support where needed.

Please share this to your communities.

Street party guide



Many of our residents and communities will be celebrating in their own way through a range of activities- perhaps holding street parties or getting involved in the national [Big Jubilee Lunch](#) with family, friends and neighbours.

We have prepared a special street party guide for everything you and residents need: from how to organise a street party and what you need to know, to jubilee recipes from local businesses and more. You can view it on our [website](#).

Please do share the street party guide with your own communities via your channels. If you would like social media assets to support this promotion, please email us at marketing@braintree.gov.uk.

Police our parish initiative



This summer the Braintree Community Policing team will be launching the summer project 'Police our Parish'.

Their plan is to do proactive patrols in each of our district's 54 parishes, working alongside neighbourhood watch, Essex Fire & Rescue and our council, plus members of your parish.

This will be in addition to the regular day to day work the police does, and will be an opportunity to highlight community safety concerns in your area and a chance to work together to reduce any issues that come to light.

The community policing team would very much like your support with this and at this stage are looking for **preferred** dates and what you believe to be the biggest issues in your community are.

Patrols will be different in each area and the policing team welcome your suggestions on how they should look.

[Contact policing team](#)

Essex library of things



Circus show kits are now available through the Essex Library of Things

The Essex library of things is continuing to grow and has been very popular since it was first launched in September 2021 by Essex County Council.

Items to hire include DIY tools, camping equipment, musical instruments, cake moulds and more.

This scheme is a partnership between the [BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy Project](#) and the Essex Library Services, and if residents are a member of the Library Service they will be able to borrow items free of charge. Items to hire include DIY tools, camping equipment, musical instruments, cake moulds and more.

There are a number of locations across Essex, including in Witham in our district.

[Find out more](#)

Covid-19 testing changes



From today (1 April 2022) Covid-19 testing in England will no longer be free of charge for everyone.

Free Covid-19 testing will only be available for:

- patients in hospital
- people most at risk from Covid-19
- people living or working in high risk settings

Most visitors to adult social care settings, the NHS, hospices, prisons or places of detention will no longer require a test.

Please share this message via your own channels.

[Find out and apply](#)

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Braintree Street Market returns for 2022

Braintree Street Market has returned for the 2022 season and it was back with a bang at the end of last month.

The sun was shining - we are not sure what has happened since - and traders and shoppers were out in force.

Our Chairman Cllr Sue Wilson, and Cllr Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, visited to see how traders have bounced back from the pandemic, and snuck in a little shopping too.

We had talented craftspeople selling handmade soap, clothing and environmentally friendly reusable wipes, plus food stalls selling artisan spirits and pickles as well as hot street food.

Street entertainers popped up to surprise the younger shoppers and traders hailed the "great vibe" in town.

We will be back on Saturday, 30 April and again on the last Saturday of each month through to October. We then have Christmas events on 19 November, and 3 and 17 December.



FREE Easter events

The Easter holidays are here and families are ready to celebrate after two years of cancelled events.

There are activities happening all over Braintree District from Hedingham Castle to Witham town centre and some are even free.

We have full listings on our Visit Braintree District webpage, and you can still send us details of yours, Just click on the Submit Event button and complete the form.

Happy Easter to all of our members.

Easter events



Queen's Platinum Jubilee

This summer we are gearing up for a long weekend of celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We are calling on businesses to get behind the celebration and asking those in Witham, Halstead and Braintree town centres to decorate their shop windows. We will highlighting some of your efforts and ask you to send us a photo once your designs are in place. You can send pictures to us [via email](#) or via social media.

There are village fetes and street parties happening in neighbourhoods all over the District. We are building a list of these [here](#) and will be adding more as we draw closer.

For those still in the planning stages - you can see our street party guide [here](#)

Social updates



www.visitbraintreedistrict.com

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£150 energy bills payment



Residents who live in properties in Council Tax bands A to D are likely to receive a £150 rebate from the government to help with the cost of energy bills.

If you don't pay by Direct Debit, further details will be given in May to arrange how the rebate will be paid to you.

You do not need to do anything to receive the rebate. We will contact you if you are entitled to it.

We have also collated information about grants, supports and schemes that could help with the cost of energy bills. [Visit our website](#) to find out more.

[Find out more](#)

Introducing DigiGo - a new on-demand electric minibus service



[DigiGo](#) - a new on-demand electric minibus service - is available to residents and businesses in parts of our district.

[DigiGo](#) is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel for residents of Central Essex and South Braintree. There is no fixed route or timetable, and [DigiGo](#) is booked through the [TravelEssex](#) journey planning app. Booking is easy:

- **Book** - Select your pick-up and drop-off points within our operational areas and pay on the app
- **Track** - Watch on your smartphone as your designated vehicle makes its way to you in real-time
- **Ride** - Hop on and travel to your destination

A journey can be booked to travel on-demand or up to 7 days in advance. Bookings are made and paid for on the [TravelEssex](#) app.

Exciting news: Braintree Street Market returns for 2022!



Our Braintree Street Market has returned for the 2022 season and it has been very successful already.

Our Chairman Cllr Sue Wilson and Cllr Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, visited last week and chatted to traders.

The market is selling a huge array of products including handmade soap, clothing and environmentally friendly re-usable wipes, as well as artisan spirits and pickles, and hot street food.

The next market will be on Saturday 30 April and from then on will take place on the last Saturday of each month through to October 2022.

[Find out more](#)

Changes to your bin & recycling collections



Your bin and recycling collections over the Easter period are slightly different to usual, to take into account the Bank Holidays.

Please check your collection calendar or download it from our [website](#).

Usual collection days will resume from Monday 25 April 2022.

Try and make your Easter as environmentally friendly as possible with these hints and tips:

- try to purchase Easter eggs with as little packaging as possible to help reduce the amount of your household waste
- all dry cardboard packaging can be placed in your clear recycling sacks
- any plastic moulds that comes with your Easter egg can also go in your clear recycling sacks
- if your Easter egg came with any foil and it can be scrunched into a ball, it can also be recycled

Check out forthcoming bank holiday collections

Ukrainian refugee support



We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and all Ukrainian people in our district and across the world. We are working closely with Essex County Council, and other agencies, to accommodate and support refugees being resettled within the Braintree district and across Essex.

To answer some of the questions about the Homes for Ukraine scheme, Essex County Council has the following pages on their website:

- ▶ [Welcome to Essex: packs for sponsors](#)
- ▶ [Information for sponsors welcoming a Ukrainian person or family](#)

Further information on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, how you can donate and show your support is available on our dedicated [Ukraine web page](#).

Covid-19 vaccination update



Children aged 5 to 11 are now eligible to receive the Covid-19 vaccination.

Appointments can be made from now [online](#) or by calling 119. Vaccinations take place at local vaccination centres or community pharmacies.

In Braintree the following pharmacies will be offering the vaccination from next week:

- Avicenna Pharmacy, Braintree
- Challis Pharmacy, Braintree
- Christchurch Clinics (Christchurch Pharmacy), Braintree

All these pharmacies are also offering vaccinations for all other age groups, including the 12 to 18 age group.

[Find out more](#)

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Free support for businesses goes live in Mid- and North Essex

A series of free business support packages have now gone live in Mid- and North Essex. The support aims to help businesses with a range of topics such as finance, low carbon, debt management, digital skills and more.

The programmes have been funded by the North Essex Economic Board and are designed to help local small and medium-sized enterprises grow.

The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) is a partnership of Braintree, Maldon, Tendring and Uttlesford district, Colchester Borough, Chelmsford City and Essex County councils working together to drive forward economic growth.

The fully-funded support programmes will be provided by partners Colbea, Let's Do Business and BEST Growth Hub.

[Find out more and register](#)

Reminder: COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund is still open to applications



The banner features a dark blue background with a yellow bar at the bottom. On the left, there is a yellow icon of a stack of coins with a pound symbol (£) on the top coin. To the right of the icon, the text 'COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, 'OPEN TO APPLICATIONS' is written in a smaller white font. At the bottom left of the yellow bar, the website 'www.braintree.gov.uk/helpforbusinesses' is written in black. At the bottom right, the Braintree District Council logo is displayed.

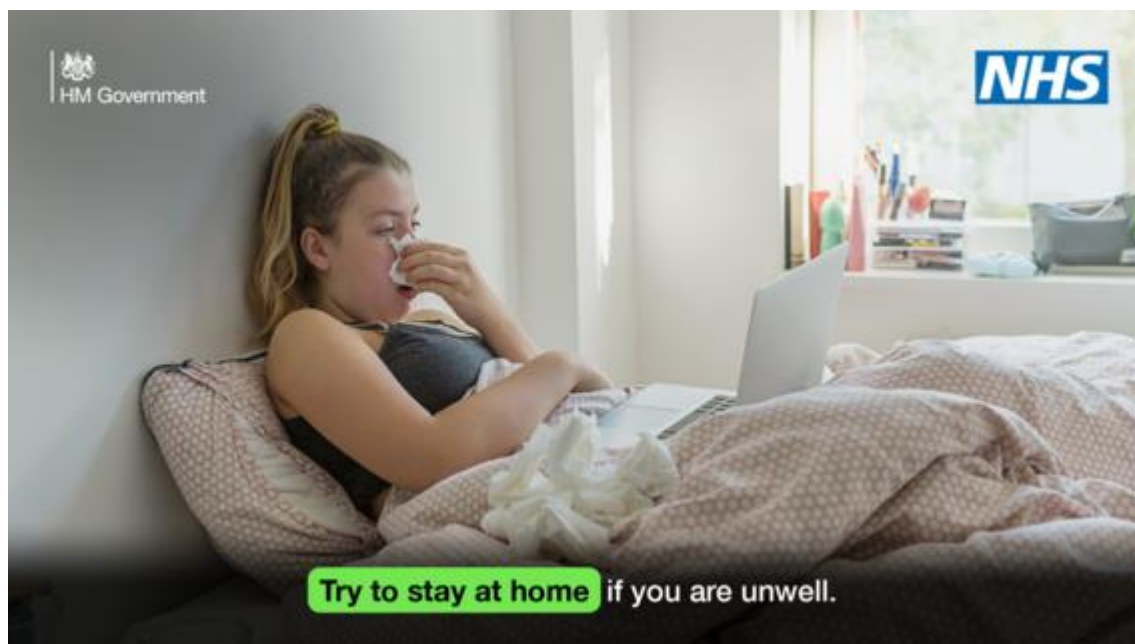
The Additional Relief Fund business rates support package is still open to applications.

This business support package, worth £2.9 million, seeks to help businesses affected by the pandemic, but who have been unable to benefit from existing support linked to business rates. This relief is for businesses outside the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

The scheme, in-line with government guidance, will support a wide range of businesses. Businesses must occupy property on which it pays business rates to be eligible.

[Find out more and apply](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/helpforbusinesses)

New guidance released for businesses on living with covid



The advertisement shows a young woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, sitting up in bed. She is wearing a dark top and has a tissue to her nose, appearing to be unwell. A laptop is open on her lap. The room is brightly lit by a window in the background. In the top left corner, the HM Government logo is visible. In the top right corner, the NHS logo is displayed. At the bottom, a green button contains the text 'Try to stay at home if you are unwell.'

The UK Health Security Agency has set out new [public health principles for workplaces](#) for businesses, organisations and employers in England. The new guidance aims to help employers to manage the risk to their workforce from respiratory infections such as COVID-19.

The new guidance has set out a number of actions for businesses in order to help reduce the spread of infections, including ensuring adequate ventilation and encouraging vaccinations. Whilst not every employer will still have to consider Covid-19 explicitly in their risk assessment, employers should continue to comply with their legal obligations to their staff. Further information is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Free Covid-19 tests are no longer available for the general public, but a number of groups will still be able to obtain them.

Anyone with a positive Covid-19 test result is advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days, which is the most infectious period.

[Find out more](#)

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New Chairman and Vice Chairman elected to Braintree District Council



Following the AGM at the beginning of the week, Councillor Andrew Hensman has been announced as our new Chairman. He has been a councillor since 2015.

Cllr Mrs Diana Garrod has been elected as Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Hensman will be focusing his civic year on meeting individuals, communities and businesses, as well as promoting the aims and values of the Council in communities.

The Chairman chose not to announce his charities at the beginning of the year, and instead opted to fundraise throughout the year and make donations to charities and communities he visits to allow chances for emerging causes.

Cllr Hensman is thought to be the first publicly autistic council chairman in the UK, and he hopes to inspire others, especially from the autistic community, that with the right support and greater understanding, they too can achieve great things.

Our outgoing Chairman of the Council, Cllr Sue Wilson attended 65 engagements in the local community and raised money for local charities.

[Find out more](#)

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Great British Spring Clean clear up of A120



Recently, the Great British Spring Clean 2022 returned for its seventh year, and the message was simple; take part in Keep Britain Tidy's 'One Bag – Big Difference' campaign and pledge to pick up as much litter as you can during the campaign.

We would like to say "Thank you" for taking part and to everyone who continues to help keep our district clean all year round, for all to enjoy.

Keep Britain Tidy recently announced that nearly half a million bags - 449,406 to be precise - were pledged by local authorities and community volunteers across the nation.

We did our bit by deep cleansing our district's eight-mile stretch of the A120 from the Felsted slip roads to Marks Farm roundabout, via Galley's Corner.

Weekend overnight working involving traffic management, 10 members of council staff litter-picked the verges and central reservation, as well as mechanical sweepers clearing over 17 tonnes of road-sweepings from the dual carriageway.

Three tonnes of rubbish were collected including 110 bags of general litter, vehicle debris, road-killed wildlife, wooden pallets, fences and planks, arm-chair cushions, a large dog bed, a roll of old carpet, a food waste recycling bin and even a blue wheelie bin!

It currently costs local tax payers, £1.54 million to keep our district clean and tidy. The deep-cleansing of the A120 which takes place three times a year costs a total of around £75k a year alone.

If you see someone throwing litter from a vehicle, please let us know and our Street Scene Enforcement Team will always follow it up!

Report litter offenders

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£150 energy rebate



£150 **GOVERNMENT
COUNCIL TAX
REBATE**



Residents who pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit will have had their payment issued and it should now be received. This will be displayed as a £150.00 credit on your bank statement with the reference 'Braintree DC Payments'.

If you believe you are eligible and did not receive your rebate, and you have been paying your Council Tax by Direct Debit, please call our Revenues team on 01376 557755.

Letters have started to be issued this week inviting customers who do not pay by direct debit to apply for their energy rebate online.

Our team has worked hard to get payments to residents as quickly as possible. They have over 50,000 payments to make as part of this rebate so please do bear with us as it may take some time to process them all.

[Find out more](#)

We are here to help you



Many of us are affected by the current rise in the cost of living and may struggle with the increase in bill payments.

We have compiled a comprehensive list of information about available benefits, support, budgeting and debt advice that you can find on our website.

[Find out more](#)

Get ready for exciting events to celebrate the Jubilee weekend



It's just under three weeks to go until we celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and there is so much you can get involved in with your friends, family and neighbours.

Check out the [Visit Braintree District website](#) for a full list of everything happening across the Braintree district that you can attend.

More details about how we are marking the occasion can be found on our [website](#).

[Find out more](#)

RideLondon is coming to Essex



The RideLondon 2022 festival of cycling is coming to Essex this year. The cycling event will be taking place from 27 May to 29 May and there will be five different races across the three days.

As some of the race events will be coming to the Braintree District, there will be temporary and permanent road closures over the weekend, which may impact on your travel plans.

Check out the road which will be affected by closures below and make alternative plans if necessary.

[RideLondon road closures](#)