

# District Council Annual Report March 2019

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Compiled by Andy Baker, Ward Councillor for Lawford.

This will be my last Annual Report for the Ward of Lawford – I am not standing for election in May 2019.

## **Boundary Commission Review/Ward Boundary Changes from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019**

*In 2018 the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England recommended that the number of Councillors at Tendring District Council (TDC) be reduced, from 60 to 48, which involved the redrawing of Ward Boundaries.*

*Those changes will take place from the local council elections in May 2019 and the Ward of Lawford will be no more.*

*The New Ward of Lawford, Manningtree and Mistley will be a three Member Ward, which means that on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 Voters will be required to vote for up to three candidates.*

*There are currently no changes to the three Parish/Town Councils.*

## **Local Plan 2013-2033**

*The Local Plan was submitted in November 2017 and examined in early January 2018.*

*Following that the inspector backed the councils' submitted figures for housing growth up until 2033 – of 550 new homes each year in Tendring, 716 in Braintree, and 920 in Colchester.*

*His response on housing figures had been delayed from the rest of the Plan after consideration of a late submission from a developer over Tendring's projected numbers. However, the inspector ruled the councils had accurately predicted housing need based on national guidelines.*

*However he had reservations about the Garden Communities proposals and indicated more work was needed before he could find Part 1 of the Plan sound. Until Part 1 is found sound, he will not consider examining Part 2 which is unique to Tendring. It is anticipated that the outcome of Section 1 will be Autumn 2019, with Part 2 being examined in public in Spring 2020, with the Plan being adopted Winter 2020/2021.*

*So at the moment Tendring remains without a Local Plan.*

## **Planning Matters in Lawford and beyond**

*The Bromley Road development (Lawford Green) has commenced with the initial 120 homes being built.*

*The Long Road site(Mistley) has yet to be commenced, despite having planning permission for 300 homes, and an approved application for the initial 96 homes.*

*However a further application for an extra 185 properties was submitted, and refused by TDC Planning Committee in November. This refusal decision has now been appealed by the developer.*

*Gladman's application for 110 homes on land in Grange Road was refused by Planning Officers in April 2018. Gladman appealed against this decision and an Appeal Hearing was due to take place in the second week of December 2018. Due to the excellent objections put forward by the members of*

*the Lawford Tye Action Group, the Planning Inspector decided that the Appeal would be dealt with by Inquiry, which is listed for a four day hearing in July.*

*Since then Gladman have submitted a further application, which has an updated Ecology report, together with other slight different details. This application is also being fought against.*

*There are also a number of other applications which are ongoing, including Colchester Road (15), Trinity Road (65), Stourview (72), and Mistle Heath (100).*

### **Change to Waste Collection**

*In June 2019 it is anticipated that the issue of 'Wheelie Bins' will commence to all those households due to receive them. There are some properties which are not suitable for them, and will retain a similar scheme as they currently receive.*

*Wheelie Bins will be emptied every two weeks, Recycling will remain as it does at present. Also from August 2019 there will be collections on Bank Holidays.*

*Further details can be found on TDC's website - <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/new-waste-service>.*

### **Sheltered Housing Schemes**

*A full review was undertaken into two sheltered housing schemes (Honeycroft, Lawford & Spendalls, Walton) run by TDC, part of an holistic approach being taken with TDC's 10 schemes.*

*A decision was made that Honeycroft would be demolished (PUT DATE IN HERE) and a substantial amount of money was set aside for that purpose.*

*A question was asked, in January, of the Portfolio Holder for Housing (Councillor Paul Honeywood) 'Can you advise as to the current situation of Honeycroft? It is sitting empty costing this council money, Has a decision been made as to what is going to replace it, and if so is there a proposed time scale and costing?'*

*This was the reply ' No decision has yet been made as to what will happen to the site following demolition – the outcome from the Government's consultation on the Green paper, RTB (Right to Buy) and Rent policy will have a bearing on what is likely to be proposed for the site'.*

*At present the building is still standing and costing approximately £3,000 (mainly for Council Tax and limited utilities costs) to keep it like that.*

### **Tourism - Clacton Air Show , Seafont Team & Seaside Festivals**

*Record crowds of in excess of 250,000 people made it again a successful Clacton Airshow, and many stayed for the night flights on the first day.*

*This year the Air show will take place on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> (11-8.30) and Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August (11-5), with night flights again taking place on the evening of the first day. There will again, in conjunction with Clacton Pier, be a firework display after the night flights.*

*Unfortunately this year the Red Arrows are not available as they are on tour in America at the time.*

*Yet again there will be potential three Seaside festivals, one in Clacton, one in Dovercourt and possibly one in Frinton. Dates are not yet confirmed for any of these but Clacton will probably be in June, and Dovercourt in August.*

### **Budget – Savings & Investment**

*Tendring District Council (TDC) agreed its budget for the coming financial year to allow the authority to continue to “punch above its weight”. The budget delivers some savings, as part of the ten-year financial plan agreed last year, and the council has also set aside funding for some major projects across the district.*

*These include more than £2million on business, investment and growth, £4.6m for the cliff stabilisation scheme in Holland-on-Sea and £2.5m on homes for Jaywick Sands. This is on top of the £1 million previously set aside for a public realm project in Harwich, and the ongoing Office Transformation (see below).*

*As part of the budget, a £5 increase in council tax for a Band D home was agreed, in line with the long-term financial plan. Neil Stock OBE, TDC Leader, said it was a “no frills” budget, “crafted to enable us to carry on being the outstanding local authority we have become”. We have already set aside significant amounts of money to keep moving our priorities forward. These are bold and ambitious projects because we are a bold and ambitious council. We play a vital role in the lives of the residents of this district and we are a force for good. We constantly punch above our weight and I can see no reason why this should change – the Government see us as a ‘can-do’ council, and that’s a reputation we want to keep delivering against.”*

*Full council voted in support of the budget at its meeting on Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, with 50 votes for, three votes against and one abstention.*

### **DURING THE YEAR**

*Throughout the Year 2018/2019 the following also took place:*

#### **A120 Improvements**

*Councillors backed calls for the A120 through Tendring to be upgraded to a dual carriageway. Members of Tendring District Council (TDC) unanimously voted through a motion at full council on Tuesday July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018 setting out the importance of the works as a matter of urgency.*

*The motion calls on Essex County Council as Highways Authority to lobby get the works included in the Government’s next road funding cycle, RIS2, which will be announced this year. It also pledges the council to gather support from MPs, stakeholders and the wider community for the scheme.*

#### **Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy**

*TDC’s Cabinet approved a new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy which gives the Council powers to fine rogue landlords up to £30,000 if they do not properly maintain their properties.*

*A check of Council tenants and visits to over 1,200 council properties checking that homes were not abandoned or being sub-let resulted in 9 council homes (that were identified as breaching tenancy rules) being allocated to people on Tendring District Council’s waiting list following a tenancy audit.*

*Tenancy fraud could include subletting, leaving a property empty, or providing false information – and potentially denies someone who is entitled to a home from a property.*

### **TDCs Office Transformation**

*Building Work has been taking place at various TDC premises as part of the ongoing Office Transformation. The Transformation project aims to use more technological solutions to improve services and to be more efficient. The programme will also see the redundant offices at Westleigh House in Carnarvon Road make way for more town centre parking and a move out of the Weeley site in late 2019. Work at the council's Pier Avenue offices is virtually complete, and work on the Town Hall phase is scheduled to begin in early 2019.*

### **Swim Safe**

*An initiative teaching young people how to keep safe in the sea is being rolled out to three locations in Tendring this summer. Swim Safe, a practical outdoor water safety programme developed by Swim England and the RNLI, was successfully held in Dovercourt in summer 2018, teaching hundreds of children water awareness among the waves.*

*It has been confirmed the initiative will be held in Dovercourt, Walton and Clacton this summer, providing free sessions to around 2,000 youngsters aged between 7-14.*

*A Swim Safe session lasts an hour. Young people spend time learning about the differences between swimming in a pool and in the sea, what the safety flags mean and how to get help if it is needed, before heading into the water to practise safety skills. There will be a programme of sessions for both schools and the public.*

*The scheme in Dovercourt is being funded by the Harwich Haven Authority, while for Clacton and Walton funding has been applied for. More information, including how to register your child's place, will be available early in 2019 through the website at <https://swimsafe.org.uk>*

### **Mayflower 400**

*A series of celebration events and a welcome centre are planned for Harwich as part of the Mayflower 400 commemorations in 2020. The Mayflower ship, from Harwich and captained by Harwich resident Christopher Jones, took the first settlers to America in 1620 in a voyage marked annually by Thanksgiving in the USA.*

*A whole programme of events is being planned across 11 UK destinations, including Harwich, for 2020 to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

**Andy Baker**  
**Ward Councillor for Lawford**