

District Councillor's Report May 2022 to Parish Councils
(Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward)

Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders

Intended closure of Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead due to commence on 26th May 2022 for 6 hours, whilst Openreach undertakes pole testing.

Update – Wethersfield Airbase Proposals: Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

There has been a great deal of interest in these proposals and I have therefore outlined an update.

Public Consultation: The MOJ undertook a public consultation exercise which began in September 2021. Braintree District Council has no power to require the MOJ to publish the results of this consultation, or to require them to carry out additional consultation. However it has passed on the concerns expressed by local Parishes and residents regarding the adequacy of that consultation.

Planning Process: As I am sure you are aware, Braintree District Council Planning Services encourages applicants to seek pre-application discussion/advice. BDC has been engaging in pre-application discussions with the MOJ and their consultants. They have been discussing a range of issues which will need to be considered should a planning application be submitted. The MOJ submitted a request for an Environmental Scoping Opinion in November 2021 and BDC's response was sent to the MOJ and published on BDC's website. This is a formal process under which the Council sets out the matters that should be covered within the Environmental Statement that would need to accompany a potential planning application. The information submitted by the MOJ, consultation responses and BDC's response can all be found on BDC's website.

Next Steps: If a planning application is submitted, then as a development required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES), the Council will have a statutory timescale of 16 weeks to determine the application. However the Council will be looking to agree an appropriate timescale for the determination of any planning application which reflects both the public interest and the likely volume and complexity of documents which would accompany it. This would be subject the MoJ's agreement.

If a planning application is submitted all the information which came with it will be published on the Councils website and available to view. The Council will invite statutory consultees such as Essex County Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency to comment and it will also be subject to a period of public consultation. This is normally a 30 day period, but recognising the level of information which is likely to be published, the Council will do its best to be flexible on this point. In line with the Councils scheme of delegation, a development of this size and type will be determined by the Planning Committee in the usual way. If an application is submitted, more detail of how and when that committee would take place and how it would be managed will be agreed with the Chairman and published in due course. This will be a public meeting which would also be available to watch via the Councils committee Youtube Channel

Energy Rebate

BDC is working hard to issue a £150 energy rebate to households living in council tax bands A to D. Those who have been paying their Council Tax by Direct Debit from 1 April 2022 will have had their payment issued and should receive it no later than 9 May 2022. Residents who have been paying their Council Tax by Direct Debit from 1 May 2022 will receive their payment in May. Residents who do not pay by Direct Debit will be able to access our online form very soon and further details will be issued this month.

The BDC website updated with the latest information.

Scam alert: There are several scams in circulation using the £150 rebate to call or text people for their bank details or asking you to click on links. If you are worried about any potential council tax scams you have received, you can speak to the Revenues team by calling 01376 557755. For more information on how to recognise a scam or what to do if you have been the victim of one, please contact Citizen Advice.

Rural Verge Cutting

Cllr Wendy Schmitt; Cabinet Member, Climate Change and The Environment has announced that Braintree District Council and Essex County Council have agreed to maintain a single full width cut (in the autumn) of the rural verges across the Braintree District for the next 3 years, recognising that there is balance to be obtained in promoting biodiversity, habitat creation and protecting wildlife, whilst ensuring the overall safety of all road users. BDC will also undertake ad-hoc safety cuts of the verges around junctions on request where visibility compromises road safety. This will not generally apply to linear lengths of the verges where the grass does not present a genuine safety issue to road users.

Process for Requesting Safety Cuts: Safety cuts can be requested either on-line at www/braintree.gov.uk/contact or by contacting the Customer Services Team on 01376 552525. Following receipt of a request, a site inspection will be made to verify

the need for a cut and this will be added to the works programme as required and the person reporting it notified of the decision. (There is no need to contact Essex County Council, as BDC maintains the rural verges on their behalf).

Please note that other highways issues such as overhanging trees or highway signage that is obscured or requires cleaning/maintenance should be reported direct to Essex Highways at <https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us>

Policing the Parishes Update (Town & Parish Meeting)

PC James Draper attended a recent meeting to provide a Police update and talk about the plans to engage with parishes over the summer period. Essex Police are hoping to visit all the parishes this summer to talk to local residents about any issues, work with local schools and community groups. The aim is for this to be a multi partner visit where possible and dates will be co-ordinated over the next month. PC Draper gave an update on Community Policing in the district and trends. Issues can now be reported using the online chat function on the Essex Police website <https://www.essex.police.uk/>

Ukraine Update

Ukrainian guests have been arriving in our district and the community has come together to welcome and support them. BDC has been busy carrying out accommodation checks to ensure they are fit for purpose and suitable for guests, with the safeguarding checks being carried out by Essex County Council. BDC has also distributed the £200 payments that Ukrainian guests are entitled to in our district if sponsored through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Welcome packs have been produced to help sponsors and their guests understand and access the wide range of support available in the Braintree district. The packs are available in Ukrainian and Russian.

BDC will continue to work alongside partner agencies to ensure those who arrive into the district have the appropriate support. Any sponsors or guests who need support, please do get in touch with our Communities team at communityhub@braintree.gov.uk or by calling 01376 552525 who are more than happy to help where they can.

Braintree District Council – New Chairman and Vice Chair

I am delighted to advise you that I have been elected Vice-Chairman of Braintree District Council for 2022/23. Cllr. Andrew Hensman is elected Chairman. Andrew has been a District Councillor in the Braintree Central and Beckers Green ward since 2015. We are available for engagements via BDC's Civic Team: civic@braintree.gov.uk

Cllr. Diana Garrod
Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward