

BOLLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL: GOLD STANDARD
CE Bollington Ward Councillors Report to BTC for April Council Meeting 2024.
We present this Report for consideration and discussion as required.

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We congratulate Bollington Mayor , Helen Ellwood , on a very enjoyable and successful Mayors Ball on March 1st. at Shrigley Hall

We look forward to a well attended Town Meeting on Wednesday 20th March 2024

Guest Speaker:

Cheshire East Councillor: Laura Crane

Topic: Local highways

We welcome the appointment of Harriet Worrell to the role of Town Clerk on a temporary basis and look forward to working together for the benefit of Bollington.

Your Borough Councillors have been involved with supporting Bollington Town Council in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan Revision and with drafting a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission

At a meeting recently it was suggested we provide bullet points and a summary. We have considered this action but regard it as too simplistic.

We can scan this document in 10 minutes ourselves. If a synopsis is required by the Town Council we would ask for Secretarial time to be devoted to the task.

Late Late News Councillor John Stewart held a public meeting under his own auspices at the Cotton Tree Public House on Feb, 18th at 7.00p.m. Your Borough councillor attended as a member of the public. The meeting was called to discuss the kinds of assets that might be devolved to Bollington. In particular the Pool Bank Car Park and the Bollington Recycling Centre were discussed. There was a good attendance of more than 50 people. A show of hands revealed a unanimous wish of the meeting for both options to be considered though from questions asked and comments made it was acknowledged that the Recycling Centre would be a far more complex challenge than Pool Bank Car Park as it appeared from the legislation the service could not be charged for to residents. General Cheshire East matters were also discussed.

Late News: Crossfield Road Bungalows: Residents have expressed concerns about neglect and lack of maintenance of unlet bungalows plus other indications of unknown long term plans by Cheshire East. With Borough councillor support they have asked Peaks and Plains for an explanation and are awaiting a response. We have ascertained there is no immediate development planned for land behind the bungalows.

1. Local Government Boundary Commission.

Bollington Ward Boundary Review

The March Report set out the issues and a way forward. During the month plans changed due to the nature of Cheshire East's proposals for Rewarding. These were agreed at the Feb. 27th Council meeting. The amendment proposed by Macclesfield Town Councillors which would have meant the whole of Bollington Parish would have been included in the proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward was lost.

Cheshire East's agreed proposal

Therefore, the recommendation from Cheshire East presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission included the proposal:

1. Higher Hurdsfield would move into the Macclesfield Hurdsfield Ward
2. The Parishes of Rainow and Pott Shrigley would move into a Bollington and Rainow Ward.
3. Bollington Parish would be divided in two by the Silk Road becoming the border of the new Bollington and Rainow Ward.

Bollington Town Council's position

4. The BTC Ward Boundary Review Working Group decided to :
 - a) Accept the parish changes. Bollington needed additional electors to justify being allotted 2 Councillors.
 - b) Fight the split of Bollington as strongly as possible
5. In these circumstances it was agreed Town Cllr. Ken would draft the report with Cllr. Sam acting as moderator.
6. The Draft Report will be circulated and sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission.
7. **The Report is drafted and will be circulated and agreed for presentation to the Boundary Commission by the deadline of April 1st.2024**

2. Cheshire East Medium Term Financial Strategy: MTFS A 'balanced' budget for 2024/25. No S114 Notice.

The Cheshire East 'Balanced Budget ' was passed on February 27th 2024. The Chief Financial Officer and Cheshire East External Auditors Mazars both accepted the situation as financially stable, i.e. capable of achievement no S114 Notice required. But there are continually escalating costs of our Statutory Responsibilities for Adult Social Care and the Care of Vulnerable Children
e.g. it is estimated that the following investment will be needed in :

Adult Social Care

Year 24/25 £7.6million 25/26 £4.0million 26/27 £4.0 million 27/28 £4.0 million

Growth in Childrens Placement Costs

Year 24/25 £10.8million 25/26 £4.6million 26/27 £ 5.2. million 27/28 £5.9million

- a) **The budget is exposed to threat because of a weak reserve position. By the end of 24/25 it looks like only £2 million will be available in General Reserves and the Finance Officer has recommended £18 million as a 'Target' for the General Reserve.**
- b) **Other specific reserves held for individual purposes throughout the budget e.g. Self Insurance Reserves have been depleted and need to be recreated in future to supplement the General Reserve.**
- c) **The new Chief Executive, Rob Polkinghorne, has proposed creating a Transformational Programme to reduce the costs of operating CE's services.**
- d) **There are a number of further reductions planned to services to communities as well as increase in charges. These are in addition to the ones already announced. The Library Service is a case in point. With over £500,000 to be saved over 2 years.**

This years MTFS is no different. We still need time to absorb the hundreds of pages of information provided and to interpret the figures for this year which will be agreed and those which schedule plans for the future.

Reserves:

Although Cheshire East have produced a balanced budget our reserves are very low as a result and we have to work hard to improve our general and special reserve provision. There needs to be a plan to do that and the MTFS contains that plan. But it will be hard to implement and result in considerable community discontent.

THE INFORMATION IN THE MTFS IS THE START OF THAT PROCESS.

Bollington Recycling Centre 'The tip'

There has been no change. So Your Councillors leave the explanation of Mr. Kemp in place. We note the meeting at a local Garden Centre organised by Chris Wellavise on Sunday 17th. March. 4.00p.m.

- 3. Please Note: Your Councillors do their best to provide relevant information in a timely manner. Any concerns relating to that information should be directed by Town Councillors and Residents to your Borough Councillors who are directly responsible for representing the residents of Bollington and Higher Hurdfield.**

Thank you.

4. **Mothballing Recycling Centres: Poynton and Bollington**

All Bollington Town Councillors were warned of proposals that the Bollington Recycling Centre could close in the January 2024 newsletter.

Now plans are much clearer or rather not completely opaque!!

This is how things stood at the beginning of March 2024.

Dear Cllr Edwards (from Ralph Kemp Senior officer in charge of this area of service.)

With respect to your questions at present no decision has been taken to alter the service at Bollington Household Waste Recycling Centre.

The Council has consulted on EC3: Reduce costs of waste disposal and number of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

[CE Budget Consultation for 2024 to 2025 - Full report \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/CE-Budget-Consultation-for-2024-to-2025-Full-report)

Summary of proposal: The council is undertaking a review of household waste recycling centres and procuring a new main contractor beginning in April 2025. The existing business case review of household waste recycling centres covers savings associated with this process already in train. This proposal is to deliver savings earlier through a temporary emergency closure of the household waste centres too statutory provision to four core sites at Alsager, Crewe, Knutsford and Macclesfield from 1 April 2024 in advance of the formal HWRC review being presented to Committee later in 2024.

This will be considered as part of the full Council Budget Decision at its meeting on the on 27 February 2024. If a decision is made at full Council to proceed, Bollington would be temporarily closed until a full decision on future service decision is made at the September 2024 Environment and communities committee.

The long term provision was discussed at the 28 September 2023 committee which outlined a number of options to be consulted on and brought back to the committee in September 2024.

Details of the options can be found in the committee paper [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Environment and Communities Committee, 28/09/2023 10:00 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)

Hope that helps to reassure you no decision has been taken and if the site is temporarily closed it will be done in such a way as to allow it to reopen under the new contract if the September 2024 committee decided that was to be part of future service provision.

This is confirmed by the MTFS arrangements where savings of £263,000 are noted for 24/25 and returned to the budget for 25/26.

The MTFS Description of action reads:

(72) (Budget line number) Emergency Reduction of Household Waste Recycling Centres(HWRC) to four core sites(EC3b)

Emergency reduction of of Household Waste Recycling Centres(HWRC's) to four core sites at Alsager, Crewe, Knutsford and Macclesfield from 1st. April 2024 in advance of the formal HWRC review being presented to (The Environment and Communities) Committee later in 2024.

Impact on budget 24/25 -£263,000 25/26 +£263,000

4a Update: Local Meeting to discuss Mothballing HWRC's Sunday March 17th. 2024.

Mr. Wellavise called and hosted a public meeting at Prestbury Nurseries for about 100 people. The unanimous view was that the Leader and Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council should be asked to a meeting with representatives of local residents to consider postponing the closure beyond April 1st. to allow other financing alternatives to be explored. Cll. K Edwards was requested to draft the request and agreed to do so. The request has been sent and a reply awaited.

5. Bollington Neighbourhood Plan Review

The very good news is that the Neighbourhood Plan Review Committee which is strongly supported by your Borough Councillors is forging ahead with the Review Process.

An excellent Consultation Document has been produced and distributed. Completed forms are beginning to come back and Chair Mike Burdekin is doing a heroic job in putting them into an easily understandable statistical format. So far the aims and policies of the current plan are receiving endorsement. Your Borough Councillors recommend the strongest possible efforts to ensure as many residents as possible complete and return the Questionnaire. We congratulate the BNP Review Group on its production. And distribution. It is now up to our residents to have their say.

6. The Neighbourhood plan, the Green Belt and the National Planning Policy Framework

[23/4024M - Land Adjoining Jenny Heyes, HEYES LANE, ALDERLEY EDGE, SK9 7LH: Permission in principle \(Stage 1\) for an affordable housing exception site and associated works for Mrs A Wood](#)

This planning application is submitted under new arrangements provided by adjustments to the Planning Application legislation in 2023. The application is for a development of 'affordable' housing in the Green Belt on the border of Alderley Edge.

Your Borough Councillor Ken Edwards abstained on the vote for this application. The reason was simple it did not seem right that Green Belt should be taken for development without establishing the 'very special circumstances' required. You could not determine those circumstances unless you knew what exactly what was going to be placed on that Green Belt development. 'Affordable housing' has a huge variety of forms including housing for sale. The information on housing need in Alderley Edge was primarily for renting one and two bed apartments for young people and couples not for 2 or 3 bedroomed semis which was the proposal. This new form of application needs to be studied and ameliorated if possible by Neighbourhood plan policies.

7. Planning Permission 'call ins'. New BTC procedure required. We have received no response.

At last the Call In procedure has been explained. It works like this.

- 1. All Planning Permission applications in their Ward are notified to Ward Councillors i.e. John Place and Ken Edwards**
- 2. Nearly all are decided by Planning Officers.**
- 3. The Ward member has 2 weeks from the date of the email only to call the decision in to Committee and must give notice of the Planning Considerations for the reason for the 'call in'.**
- 4. This means that often the 'Call in' must be done before the Committee/Council meets to consider the application.**
- 5. So we need a new BTC procedure to manage 'call ins' so they can be done as necessary.**
- 6. Suggested procedure:**
 - i) Planning Applications are notified to Ward Councillor**
 - ii) Ward Councillor alerts Town Clerk and Chair of the Planning committee.**
 - iii) Town Clerk and Chair of Planning Committee meet and decide on call in or not. Bringing in Those with experience as necessary.**
 - iv) Town clerk informs Borough Councillor of decision.**
 - v) Borough councillor Acts accordingly to request a call in or not.**

8. Other Planning Issues

Planning application 18/3938M and the modification application 24/0289M

34 houses at Lowerhouse between the Mill and the River Dean. The modification application has caused some confusion. The application is solely to

modify legal S106 agreements in favour of the developer. A common occurrence particularly on difficult sites like this one. Ruth Tams and others have provided pictures illustrating the flood water flowing across it. This danger has been dealt with in the body of the report on 18/3938 which can be examined in detail on the website in the Planning Search facility.

The Environment Agency has been contacted and made aware of local concerns. We have had confirmation they will respond.

10 The Bollington Recreation Ground S106 Funding Review. Still no report has been produced.

We at last have news that Neil Allen is producing the Community Recreational Needs report with regard to the Recreation Ground. We expected it would be with us by the first week in March. The Community Consultation Report from Neil Allen will make recommendations for the use of the S106 funds that have been agreed to be devoted to improving our Recreation Ground. BTC Councillors have rightly been critical of the time taken to decide how to allocate these funds between the various sporting and leisure activities that the Recreation Ground supports. After a recent follow up by your Borough councillors Mr. Allen has recognised and apologised for the delay and has stated completion will be his top priority.

We hoped the pledge was meant. Unfortunately, we have had to send a strong reminder to all concerned. Cheshire East, ANSA and Mr. Allen. We have been very badly let down by cheshire East over this matter and I am very disappointed that after a year as a Cheshire East councillor still no progress has been made.

9. Highways and Transport .

Your Borough Councillors have (in theory) £6200 each to spend on local Highways Improvements.

In practice since May we have noted one or two barriers to getting this expenditure allocated:

1. Decision taking on projects.
2. Who to approach in the multiplicity of Highways units of responsibility.
3. The rejection of local contractors in favour of Ringway Jacobs.
4. The 'assessment' processes.
5. Times for plans to be developed.
6. Getting budgetary approval through 'the system'.

Nevertheless we have in the pipeline now the following projects:

Bollington

1. The long standing one of White line markings next to the cottage at 6 Hurst Lane.

2. Repainting white lines at the junction of Bollington Road and Flash Lane
3. Repainting the white lines at the roundabout junction of the Shrigley Road and Ingersley Road next to the bus stop
4. Double yellow lines on the junction of Wellington Road and Waterwheel Way
5. Double yellow lines on the junction of Albert Road with Greg Avenue

11. Higher Hurdsfield

1. Signage from Kerridge Road onto Swanscoe Lane warning lorry drivers that there is no through Road. Lorries get stuck at the top of Well Lane and have to back all the way about half a mile to Kerridge road potentially causing a lot of damage.
2. Cliff Lane needs more prominent signage at the bottom and new signage at the top warning no access to lorries. Sometimes larger vehicles try to use it as a cross country rat run and it is very narrow with very badly eroded sides of the lane and no passing for about 500 metres around blind bends.

12, Education (Ongoing no change.)

St. Gregorys Roman Catholic Primary School.

There has been a formal consultation on the closure of St. Gregory's Primary School

Your CE Councillors are advocating that:

1. The School buildings will be kept for use in the public sector.
2. There is a strong wish in the educational sector that the buildings should be dedicated to serving the needs of children with Special Educational Needs.
3. This ambition needs to be clarified. In principle your CE Councillors support this proposal. The buildings are jointly owned by Cheshire East and the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
4. Staff support the above aims.

Cllr. Ken Edwards

Cllr. John Place

Please refer any questions by BTC email to the above.

19/03/24