

GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Autumn 2023 Issue no. 40



Welcome to Gillingham Town Council's Autumn Newsletter.

As always, it has been an incredibly busy summer – there is never a dull moment for our staff and councillors!

As the seasons change and the leaves begin to change colour it won't be long before our trees provide a spectacular show of colour. Autumn is a great time to visit our public open spaces in Gillingham and this time of year is perfect for observing wildlife.

Our grounds team will be busy repairing fencing and paths, restoring benches and seats, and repairing and installing play equipment. Maintenance work will continue on our trees and hedges and other essential work will be carried out to improve and enhance the biodiversity on all our sites.

Now that the weather is getting colder, our gardeners will be busy weeding and mulching the gardens. It's the perfect time to plant bulbs and, once again, we will be planting a variety of bulbs which will provide a splash of colour throughout the town next Spring.

Autumn is a busy time of year for our councillors too, as work begins on the council's budget for the next financial year. All our meetings are open to the public and everyone is very welcome to attend – details are available on our website or on request from the Town Hall.

This edition of our newsletter includes news from the summer months and information about our plans for the autumn – we hope you enjoy it.

Julie Hawkins, CiLCA PSLCC
Town Clerk

A Message from the Mayor of Gillingham, Cllr Barry von Clemens

Hello Gillingham

There has been so much happening in our town over the summer months. We are very fortunate in Gillingham to have such dedicated people within our community who are willing to volunteer their time to organise and run some fabulous events.

It has been a pleasure to attend them and, on behalf of the people of Gillingham, I would like to thank all those involved.

One such event was Gillingham Live on 8th July. This was a fantastic day, with so many great acts entertaining the crowds on the Town Meadow, with all of the profits going to local Gillingham charities. Well done to everyone involved - I am looking forward to next year's event.

The Town Meadow also hosted two craft markets which I was delighted to attend. It is so good to see the centre of the town come alive with these sorts of events. I am always happy to be able to offer my support to develop commerce and industry in our town, as is the Council.



The town has marked some major anniversaries over the past few months. Gillingham Bowls Club celebrated its 100th anniversary and here at the Town Council, we marked the 50th civic year with a wonderful exhibition at the Town Hall showing the journey of our council through its 32 Mayors. Many of our past mayors came along to share their memories and look at the displays (see Page 9).

It was a pleasure to meet so many residents at our stand at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show.

In addition to being able to chat to your councillors, we wanted your views on the revision of the town's Neighbourhood Plan. This is a very important document that will be used to help ensure future development in our town is what we need and what our residents would like to see (further information is given on Page 7).

If you haven't already filled in the survey, please do take a few minutes out of your busy day to do so. Surveys can be found at the Town Hall, on our website and at other locations around the town, including the library. The closing date is 11 October 2023.



Following a request for a Pump Track at Hardings Park by some of the 6th form students at Gillingham School, we took the opportunity at the Show to ask residents of all ages for comments and suggestions on future leisure facilities at Hardings Park. We are now collating all the feedback to see what we are able to achieve.



The Town Council has not been silent regarding the consultation on the proposed reduction of ticket office opening hours across the rail network. Our councillors have been spreading the word and asking people to complete the consultation document. As a council we have also written to the rail company, expressing our objection to the proposal to reduce the opening hours at Gillingham Station's ticket office.

As you can see there has been so much happening here in Gillingham and I have only just skimmed the surface.

Please keep an eye out for the wonderful events coming to our town over the next few months, such as the Gillingham Carnival in October. Remember that Gillingham Town Council hold meetings on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Monday of each month. Why not come along and see what's happening or make an appointment at the Town Hall to meet your councillors, who are always available for a chat at our councillor surgeries.

Until next time, keep yourselves safe and well Gillingham.

Gillingham Celebrates Green Flag Awards as it is officially recognised as having some of the country's best public open spaces



In a record-breaking year we have achieved three prestigious Green Flag Awards on our sites in Gillingham along the Rivers Stour, Lodden and Shreen Water.

The news that the sites have achieved the accreditation - the international quality mark for parks and green spaces - is testament to the hard work and dedication of the Town Council's Grounds Team who manage the green spaces. The Town Council is also grateful for the help of volunteers from Gillingham Action for Nature Group, Green Gang and Gillingham Litter Pickers who help to care for the public open spaces so that everyone can enjoy them.

Keep Britain Tidy's Green Flag Award Scheme Manager, Paul Todd MBE, said: *"I would like to congratulate everyone involved in achieving the Green Flag Awards for Gillingham. The sites are vital green spaces for the community of Gillingham, bringing people together and providing opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles. The staff and volunteers do so much to ensure that the high standards of the Green Flag Award are maintained. Everyone involved should feel extremely proud of their achievement."*

The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Biodiversity

The Town Council is proud to work with Dorset Wildlife Trust who carry out seasonal monitoring on our public open spaces and offer advice to our Grounds Team on how to improve management strategies.

Our Biodiversity Action Plans are carefully produced with the help of Dorset Wildlife Trust to improve and enhance biodiversity on our public open spaces. This year, Dorset Wildlife Trust completed an impressive wildlife survey which reflects all the good work that has been done on Gillingham's sites over the past few years.

Photographs by kind permission of Hamish Murray, Dorset Wildlife Trust



Common Lizard



Cinnibar Moth Catterpillar



Emerald Damselfly

Himalayan Balsam

Himalayan Balsam is a major weed problem on riverbanks. It grows rapidly between June and October and spreads quickly, smothering other vegetation.

Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds and these are dispersed widely as the ripe seedpods shoot their seeds up to 7m (22ft) away.

Our grounds team have been working hard to control this invasive species using a non-chemical control method which involves pulling or cutting the plants by hand before they flower and set seed.



A big thank you to our grounds team and to everyone who is clearing riverbanks upstream, especially Bourton Wildlife and Habitats Group – your hard work is making a big difference to Gillingham's riverbanks.

Gillingham Town Council's Play Areas

Days out don't have to be expensive - don't forget we have 17 play areas in Gillingham which are all free to visit.

Our play areas are great safe spaces where children can make new friends, learn new skills and make childhood memories.

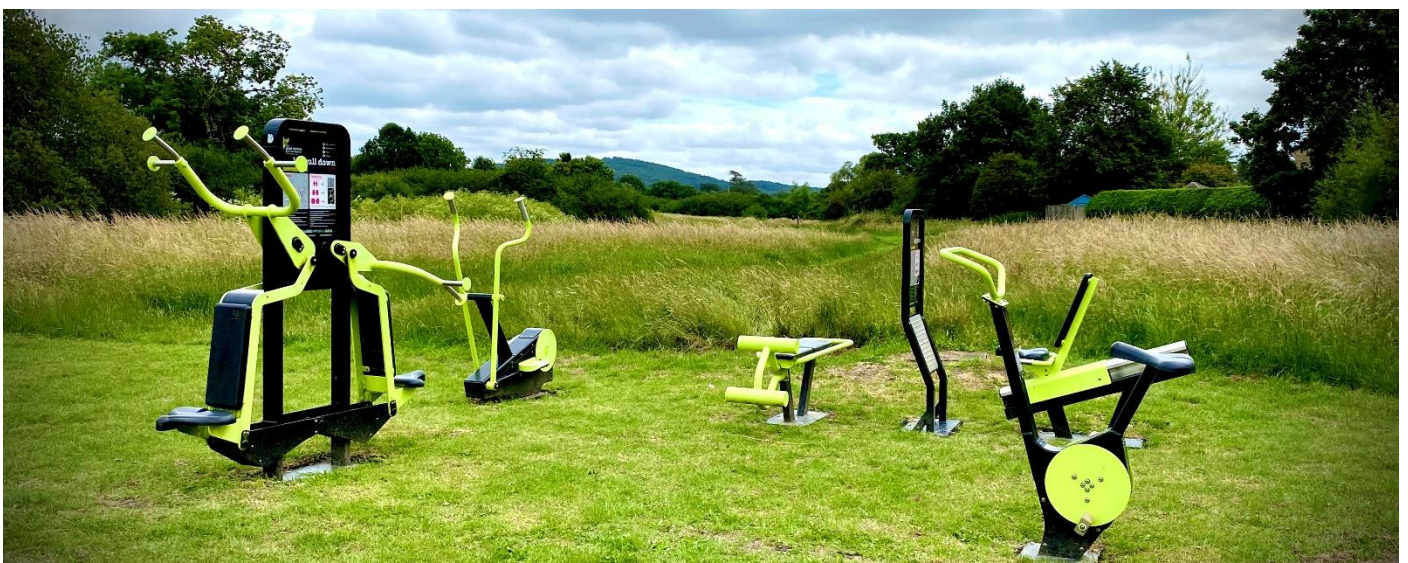
Further information regarding our play areas is available on our website.



Gillingham's Green Gyms

People who use outdoor gyms report higher levels of well-being and lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

Our outdoor gyms at King Edmund Green and Lower Lodden are set amongst a backdrop of beautiful scenery. What better than to have a free work-out whilst enjoying the beautiful surroundings.



Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan

The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in 2018, is now being reviewed and updated and we need your help to shape the future of the town.

- **What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

It is a tool for local communities to have a say in the future of the places where they live and work.

A neighbourhood plan has real legal weight that directs development in your local area. It helps local people to:

- ❖ choose where new homes, shops and offices are to be built
- ❖ have a say on what those new buildings should look like
- ❖ grant planning permission for new buildings the community wants.

- **Why we need the views of Gillingham residents**

Firstly, this is **your** plan and we want to hear how you want Gillingham to develop and what your priorities really are.

This plan is a **legal** document. Without an agreed local plan, we are more reliant on the ambitions and ideas of developers and others who may not share our local goals.

Creating a neighbourhood plan is a complicated, time consuming and tightly controlled process. To gain Government approval, the plan and every detail of the process we have followed in its production, **must comply** with strict guidelines.

One of the most important guidelines is that we must **show clear evidence** of public participation and involvement throughout the development of the final plan.

It is vitally important that you give us your views

- ❖ We urgently need to update our existing plan to ensure that Gillingham residents have the legal planning protection they deserve.
- ❖ Without your views no plan can be fully approved and considerable time, expenditure and planning leverage will be lost

We need your help today

- ❖ Please give us your views
- ❖ Please give us your postcode to prove you live within the Gillingham Area (Only residents qualify according to Government Rules)
- ❖ Please indicate your age group (So we can demonstrate a wide range of participation)

To take part in the survey please follow the link below to our website. If you require the survey in a different format please contact the Town Hall who will be happy to provide the survey via email or as a paper copy.

[Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2023 \(office.com\)](https://www.gillingham.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan-survey-2023)

The survey will close at midnight on 11 October 2023

Future Development

The Planning Committee consider over one hundred planning applications each year, from small extensions to large developments. Each application is carefully examined by committee members and recommendations are made to the local planning authority, Dorset Council, who decide whether or not to grant planning permission.



The committee want to make sure that new development is supported by the necessary infrastructure and community facilities, both to meet the overall needs of the town and the more local needs associated with each new development area. Once a planning application has been approved, a legal agreement is drawn up between Dorset Council and the developer in order to provide necessary infrastructure - this agreement is known as a Section 106 agreement.

Section 106 funding will provide infrastructure including future sports facilities, sports pavilions, a community hall and improvements to footpaths and local public transport. Developments will provide play areas and public open space, and at Wyke 4.3ha of land will be enhanced and improved for public enjoyment.

Councillors and staff have been out and about consulting members of the public regarding infrastructure and community facilities which can be delivered through Section 106 funding. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete our surveys and tell us about what is important to them, especially the young people who have contacted us with their ideas on how we can improve Hardings Park.



The council meet on the first four Mondays of each month (except December). Meetings are held at Gillingham Town Hall and everyone is very welcome to attend.

Councillors and officers are always available to answer questions should you have any concerns. We are also keen to hear from you if you have any ideas that you think would benefit the town – please call 01747 823588, email

GTC@gillinghamtowncouncil-tc.gov.uk or call in to the Town Hall during working hours.

50 Years of Gillingham Mayors

In July we had the great honour of hosting an event at the Town Hall where we were joined by some of Gillingham's past Mayors, Mayoresses, Consorts and family members to celebrate Gillingham Town Council's 50th Civic Year and to share some wonderful memories.

Here are a few of our favourite photos kindly shared by some of Gillingham's past Mayors and their families.



CLlr Hiscott hands the Mayoral Chain to
CLlr Tony Coombes in 1974



CLlr Pete Crocker, Mayor of Gillingham welcomes Queen Elizabeth II
and Prince Phillip to Gillingham in 1990



CLlr Fred Evill in the Red Cross Sponsored Bed Push 1982



CLlr Brian Millichamp 2007



CLlr David Milsted 2014



CLlr Su Hunt – Mayor of Gillingham 2018

Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show

Thank you to everyone who visited our stand at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show in August - it was great to talk to so many people, listen to ideas and answer questions.



North Dorset Networking Event

Thank you to everyone who joined for the first 'North Dorset Networking Event' at Gillingham Town Hall in August.

It was great to meet so many inspiring people running some of North Dorset's great tourism businesses.



Climate Change and Carbon Management

This summer we have been able to install solar panels on the roof of the Council's workshops at Roman Court thanks to a kind and generous donation from a Gillingham resident, who wishes to remain anonymous.

The donation enabled us to install twelve solar panels helping us to reduce our costs which, in turn, will benefit every council tax payer in the town.

On behalf of the town, we wish to thank you for your support and generosity.



Gillingham Craft Markets

Gillingham's craft markets are going from strength to strength and the craft market on the Meadow this August attracted a great selection of craft stalls which were popular with residents and visitors to the town.

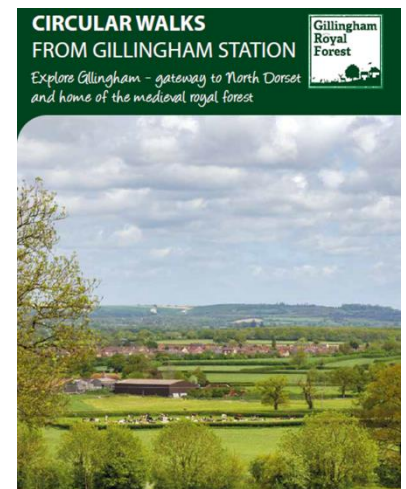
The next event will be The Magic of Christmas Food and Craft Fair which will be held at RiversMeet Leisure Centre on Sunday 26 November - now in its 9th year, this has become a firm favourite in the local calendar.



New Walking Packs

Gillingham Walkers are Welcome and the Gillingham Royal Forest project have launched their brand new walks pack. Most of the walks start from Gillingham Station and the packs will be available at stations along the line. As before, the packs are free thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and funding from Gillingham Town Council.

Packs are available from Gillingham Library, Gillingham Town Hall and other places around the town.



Gillingham Walking Festival

This September the ever popular Walking Festival returned to Gillingham for a 9th time. There were walks every day - long ones, short ones and in-between ones. Some involved food, some involved a bus journey. All the walks were led by experienced leaders who had planned some interesting new routes, as well as some old favourites.

Remembrance Bench

One of Gillingham's Cadets has been looking at ways in which we can improve and enhance the area around Gillingham's War Memorial. Matthew Penney carried out some research and presented the council with an idea for a new memorial bench to be installed adjacent to the War Memorial. The Town Council were impressed by his research and this year were delighted to install the bench, as suggested by Matthew.



Gillingham Mills Information Board

On 30 August we unveiled an information board, which outlines the history of the Town Mills that once provided the town with a fabulous historic centrepiece.

Sadly, the mill buildings are no longer here, although the Mill Manager's cottage has survived as the only remaining building of the original complex.



John Constable Information Board

On 8 September the Mayor was joined by Sasha Constable, a descendant of John Constable, for the unveiling of an information board.

During the 1800s, the great English landscape painter visited Gillingham twice staying with his friend, the vicar John Fisher.

During these visits, he made sketches around the town and completed two works in oils – ‘*The Bridge at Gillingham*’, which is housed in the Tate Gallery, London and ‘*Parham's Mill*’, housed at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Gillingham commemorated the bicentenary of John Constable's visits with a series of special events arranged by the Local History Society and the Museum.



The Town Council is proud to be able to share part of our town's history with residents and visitors by the installation of these two new information boards.

Thanks to the Gillingham Local History Society and Gillingham Museum, in particular Dr John Porter, for researching and providing the interesting information.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE - BECOME A COUNCILLOR

We are looking for residents to come forward and stand for election as a Town Councillor for Gillingham Town Council in **May 2024**.

Please come and talk to us, find out what the role of a Councillor is, how rewarding it can be and how to stand for election. Join us at our Council meetings on a Monday evening or call into Gillingham Town Hall and speak to our friendly staff.

In May 2024 we will need 18 Councillors to represent the people of Gillingham.

Gillingham Town Council is a politically independent council with an annual budget for 2023/24 of £1,020,559.00 and responsibilities which include the following:

- Eighteen Play Areas, two Green Gyms and a Skate Park
- Over 70 acres of public open space maintained to Green Flag standard
- Over 650 significant trees
- Two allotment sites
- Gillingham Cemetery and Garden of Remembrance
- Several buildings including Gillingham Town Hall and Roman Court Workshops
- Two War Memorials
- Fourteen members of staff
- And much more ...

Gillingham is one of the fastest growing towns in Dorset and it is an exciting time to become a Councillor.

Here are some of the things that you could influence:

- The design of new recreational areas for the town, including new sports facilities
- The delivery of new infrastructure
- The review of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan
- The improvement of the Council's carbon footprint
- The protection and enhancement of the town's natural environment
- The conservation of the town's historic environment
- And much more ...

To stand for election you must:

- be on the electoral register for Gillingham; or
- have resided in the parish of Gillingham for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land in the parish; or
- your principal place of work is in the parish; or
- you live within three miles (direct) of the Town Council boundary.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IN A FLOOD?

The best way to protect yourself from flooding is to know what to do in advance. There is lots of advice on the Dorset Council website: [Flooding - Dorset Council](#)

Did you know that the Environment Agency issue 3 levels of flood warning?

1. Flood alert - Prepare

- prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- check flood warnings

2. Flood warning - Act

- turn off gas, water and electricity
- move things upstairs or to safety
- move family, pets and car to safety

3. Severe flood warning - Survive

- call 999 if in immediate danger
- follow advice from emergency services
- keep yourself and your family safe

**If you live in a flood risk area, do what you can now to prepare for a flood.
Don't wait until it happens; you may not have time.**

Start by preparing a personal flood plan. The plan should include a list of things you should do (like moving sentimental items to safety) and should include important contact details such as your utility companies and your insurance company.

You should prepare a bag of essential items to take with you if you must leave your home. Keep this in a safe place. You could include things like spare medication, glasses, clothing and important documents. Create a checklist of things to do to protect your family, such as turning off the electricity and gas to prevent a fire.

Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water

If you leave your home during a flood, you'll need to turn off your mains water, gas and electricity if it's safe to do so. You should find out in advance how to do this.

The location of water stopcocks, gas shut-off valves and electrical master switches varies between properties. The gas shut-off valve is usually beside the meter. The mains electricity cut-off is usually a big red switch on your fuse box. If you can't find your water stopcock, ask someone with practical experience or a plumber to help you.

Protect your property

You can make changes to your property that will help you to get back to normal more quickly after a flood and reduce the damage flooding can do.

To reduce flood damage, you can take steps such as laying tiles instead of carpets, moving electrical sockets higher up the wall and fitting non-return valves to stop flood water entering your property through the drains.

A directory of property flood products and services is available online at [Blue Pages](#). The website has been put together to advise and inform you of what's available to help reduce the risk of flooding to your home or business.

You are responsible for looking after your own property; therefore, it is important that you are aware of the flood risk and take measures to protect yourself, where appropriate. Further guidance is available on the National Flood Forum's website: [National Flood Forum – A charity to help, support and represent people at risk of flooding](#).

Sandbags

There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide sandbags. Residents and business owners are responsible for protecting their own property from floodwater and should have plans in place to do so.

We encourage residents to visit their local builder's merchant to purchase and store sandbags or equivalent products in advance of a flood event. However, we understand that flooding can catch some people by surprise, especially if there is no history of flooding at the property and therefore the Town Council has provided flood boxes in various locations in the town. Each box contains sandbags which can be used in the event of an emergency.

Green coloured bins containing approx. 12 sandbags are located at the following sites:

Wavering Lane East

Verge opposite Oak View
Postcode: **SP8 4NX**

Bay Road

Verge at junction of Bay Road and Shreen Way
Postcode: **SP8 4EF**

Cemetery parking area

Rolls Bridge
Postcode: **SP8 4AZ**

High Street Car Park

Postcode: **SP8 4RZ**

Lodden Bridge

Junction of Shaftesbury Road and King John Road
Postcode: **SP8 4PG**

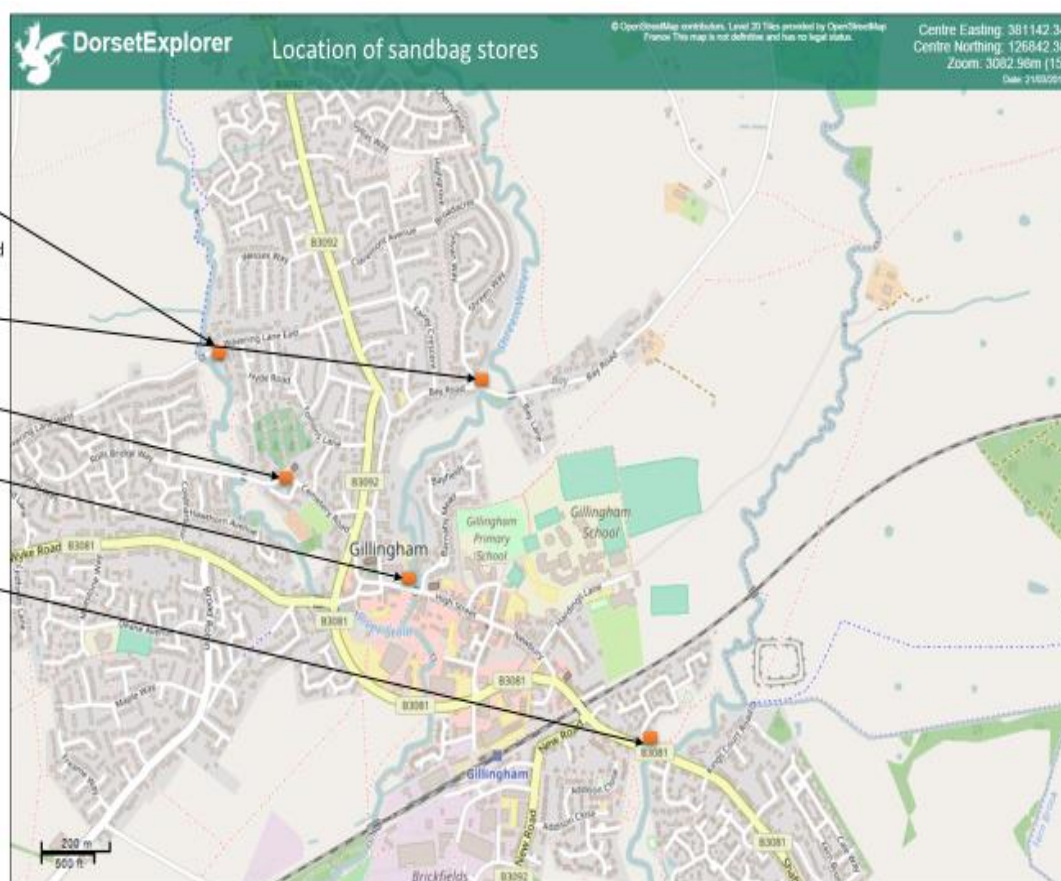
Code for the locks are:

999

Sand stores and additional empty bags are located:

Garden of Remembrance
Postcode: **SP8 4AZ**

King John Road
Postcode: **SP8 4PG**

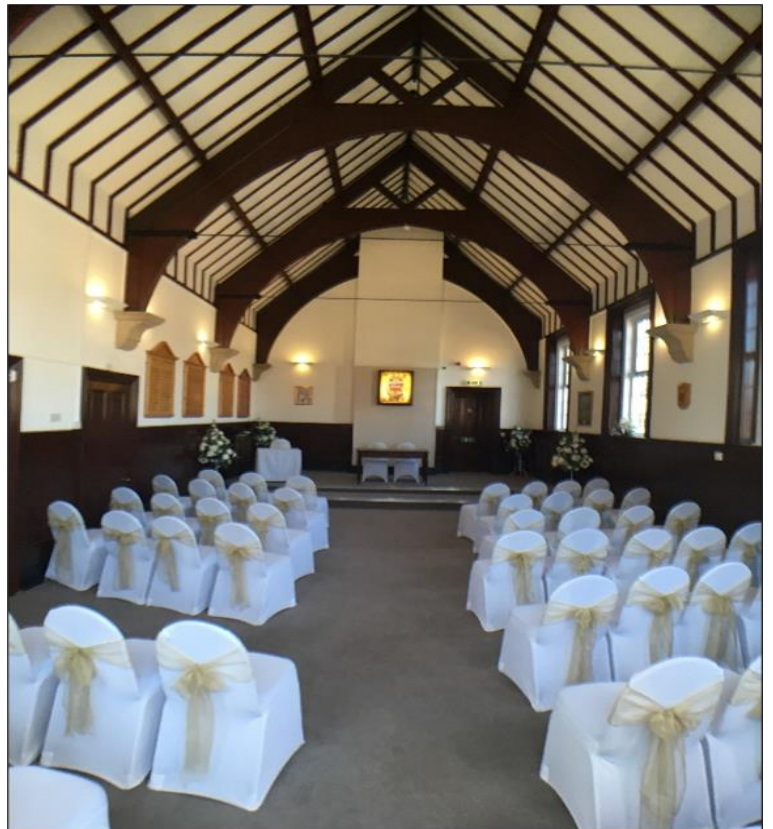


The Perfect Location to Celebrate the Important Events in Life

The Civic Hall is part of Gillingham Town Hall and is the ideal venue to get married, celebrate baby naming, renew your vows or celebrate the life of a loved one. The Civic Hall, formerly the Magistrates Court, was built in 1890 and is an impressive room with a high beamed ceiling. The Civic Hall holds 40 people seated and has wheelchair access and easily accessible toilet facilities.

If you would like to arrange a viewing, please contact Gillingham Town Council, Mon-Fri, 9.00 am to 1.00 pm
Tel: 01747 823588

Email: GTC@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Surgeries

Councillor surgeries provide residents with an opportunity to talk to a Councillor face to face and these take place on a regular basis. Our Town Councillors are approachable and knowledgeable. They are here to help and listen to you if you have a particular concern that you feel a Councillor can assist you with.

Dorset Councillor David Walsh is also holding a surgery every Friday between 3-6pm. To make an appointment please email

cllr david.walsh@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Walsh is a Councillor at Dorset Council representing the Gillingham Ward and is the Cabinet Member responsible for Planning matters. However, any issue relating to Dorset Council can be discussed.



Would you like to know what is happening in your community?
Do you have a question for your local Town Councillor?
Would you like to meet the Councillors representing you?
If yes, then please join us at one of our Surgeries

Gillingham Town Councillor Surgeries

The first Monday of the month between
3.00pm & 7.00pm at Gillingham Town Hall.

Next Surgeries:

Monday 6th November

Monday 4th December

To make an appointment
Telephone: 01747 823588 or
Email: GTC@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk

If you are not sure who you need to see, please call the Town Hall team.

GOLDEN WEDDING CELEBRATION

Cllr Roger Weeks, Deputy Mayor and his Consort, Mrs Yvonne Weeks, presented a bouquet to Edgar and Su Hunt on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Many congratulations from us all!



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL - CONTACT DETAILS

Address	Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4QR
Telephone	01747 823588
Email	gtc@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk
Website	www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk
Mayor	Cllr Barry von Clemens
Deputy Mayor	Cllr Roger Weeks
Town Clerk	Julie Hawkins
Assistant Town Clerk	Jill Ezzard
Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)	Tina Wright
Projects & HR Admin Officer	Serena Burgess
Customer Services Officer/Mayor's Secretary	Harriet Cornwall
Works Manager	Simon Dobie
Deputy Works Manager	Martin Down

CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLOR

	<p>Cllr Graham Bashford Tel: 01747 823675 Email: cllrgraham.bashford@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Fiona Cullen Tel: 07979 915985 Email: cllrfiona.cullen@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Paul Harris Tel: 01747 826991 Email: cllrpaul.harris@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr John Kilcourse Tel: 07920 871080 Email: cllrjohn.kilcourse@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Val Potheary Tel: 01747 826089 Email: cllrvalerie.potheary@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Sarah Snook Tel: 01747 826844 Email: cllrsarah.snook@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Donna Toye Tel: 07876 555046 Email: cllrdonna.toye@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Barry von Clemens (Mayor) Tel: 07835 271287 Email: cllrbarry.vonclemens@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr David Walsh Tel: 07973 228620 Email: cllrdavid.walsh@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</p>	Town Ward
	<p>Cllr Sharon Cullingford Tel: 07426 499813 Email: cllrsharon.cullingford@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Wyke Ward

	<p>Cllr Rupert Evill Tel: 01747 822886 Email: cllrrupert.evill@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Wyke Ward
	<p>Cllr Alan Frith Tel: 01747 826 394 Email: cllralan.frith@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Wyke Ward
	<p>Cllr Mick Hill Tel: 07437 301007 Email: cllrmick.hill@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Wyke Ward
	<p>Cllr Alison von Clemens Tel: 07359 256978 Email: cllralison.vonclemens@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Ham Ward
	<p>Cllr Mark Walden Tel: 07407 761020 Email: cllrmark.walden@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Ham Ward
	<p>Cllr Graham Poulter Tel: 07890 007347 Email: cllrgraham.poulter@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Milton-on-Stour Ward
	<p>Cllr Roger Weeks (Deputy Mayor) Tel: 07703 570905 Email: cllrroger.weeks@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk</p>	Rural Ward

CALLING ALL GILLINGHAM RESIDENTS



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL NEEDS YOU!

MAKE A CHANGE
BECOME A COUNCILLOR IN MAY 2024

To find out more

Website: GTC@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk

Email: GTC@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk

Tel: 01747 823588

