



Winter 2023 - Issue no. 41

Welcome to Gillingham Town Council's Winter Newsletter, the last of our newsletters for 2023.

Christmas is not far away, and our Grounds Team have been busy erecting the town's festive lights and Christmas trees thus setting the festive scene throughout the town. Thanks must go to the Gillingham Chamber of Commerce for arranging the Christmas light switch-on event this year; it was great to see so many people enjoying the festivities.

As 2023 draws to a close, we look back on our achievements and start planning for the year ahead. It is a busy time for the Council, with members starting to prepare the budget for 2024/25. We are all facing financial challenges and the Town Council will be working hard to obtain value for money, whilst at the same time providing much needed and valued services for the community. A draft budget is available for members of the public to view by appointment at Gillingham Town Hall, and comments can be made until 5th January 2024.

2024 will be a busy year for the Town Council as the current term of office comes to an end. Following the local elections on 2nd May 2024, a new council will be formed, and we are therefore keen to speak to anyone who may be interested in becoming a town councillor. Further details are included in this newsletter.

If you would like further information or have questions or comments on any matters relating to Gillingham, you are welcome to attend our public meetings or meet with our councillors and officers – please contact us at the Town Hall for further information.

We hope you enjoy reading the winter edition of our newsletter and wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Julie Hawkins, CiLCA PSLCC
Town Clerk

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

Hello Gillingham, as Mayor, I would like to take this opportunity to extend warm greetings to all of you in this festive season. Christmas is a time for families and togetherness, of joy and celebration, but it can also be a lonely time for others.

Please take a moment to think of your elderly neighbours. A simple act of kindness, such as knocking on their door and taking a few minutes to have a little chat, can make all the difference in brightening their day.



Our local charities play a vital role in supporting those in need, especially during the festive season and I would like to express my heartfelt thanks, to all those involved. If you can, please consider making a small donation. One simple act of generosity, such as donating food to our town's local food bank, can make a significant difference to someone's life. Together, we can make a positive impact and show the fabulous community spirit we have here in Gillingham.

Looking forward to 2024 we have some exciting and interesting things ahead. During 2023 we have carried out various consultations with the young people in Gillingham regarding improvements to Hardings Park. As a result, the Town Council will be working towards building a pump track at Hardings Park, which will be funded from Section 106 developer contributions.

In May, the county will be holding elections for the Town and Parish Councils, Police and Crime Commissioner and Dorset Council. If you are interested in becoming a town councillor and would like to find out more about the role, please do contact the Town Hall staff, who will be more than happy to give you more information and answer your questions. We will also be holding a series of information events between January and March.

Gillingham Town Council will continue to work towards making our council a more sustainable organisation, with several projects in the coming year. As a council we are constantly looking for ways to reduce our carbon footprint and to increase biodiversity in our town. These are just a few of the exciting projects we'll be working on in the coming year to make our town a better place to live for all our residents.

Finally, I would like to end by saying: thank you for being such a wonderful community, a community I am very proud to be Mayor of.

May this festive season be truly magical for all. Happy Christmas!

Cllr Barry von Clemens, Mayor of Gillingham

Gillingham Carnival

On Saturday 7 October, Gillingham celebrated another fantastic carnival.

A big thank you to the wonderful Mary Bailey and the Gillingham Carnival Committee who made it happen. Thank you to all the carnival clubs who brought their wonderful floats to entertain us and thank you to everyone who took part in the parades - you were amazing! Thank you to the Marshalls, First Aiders, Collectors, Drivers, Programme Deliverers, Money Counters, Street Cleaners and everyone else involved ...

Gillingham has a great community – well done.



Grants for Community Projects

The town council offers small grants to support a range of community projects and this October the following grants were awarded:

- ❖ Gillingham Carnival Committee - £1,456.00
- ❖ Gillingham DoFEOAC (Duke of Edinburgh Open Award Centre) - £683.50
- ❖ Gillingham Youth Club - £683.50
- ❖ Hope for Tomorrow - £848.00
- ❖ The Blackmore Vale Charity - The Vale Pantry £329.00

A new roof and solar panels at Roman Court Workshops

At the town council meeting held on 11 October 2023, it was resolved to seek the approval from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan of £90,000 over the borrowing term of over 12.5 but not over 13 years. This is for the purpose of replacing the roof and installing photovoltaic panels at the council's workshops at Roman Court in Gillingham.



The annual loan repayments will come to around £9,752.90. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

Mayor hosts networking events

Thank you to everyone who has joined us at our networking events. It is lovely to see so many people from our local clubs, groups and organisations.

Thank you also to everyone who donated to McMillan Cancer Support.

We look forward to hosting more events in 2024.



Gillingham's Christmas Light Event

This year, the Town Council has erected over 100 Christmas trees and several Christmas lighting displays throughout the town. On Saturday 25 November, the lights on the main Christmas tree were switched on by Father Christmas and the Carnival Royalty. A big thank you to Gillingham Chamber of Commerce for organising a fabulous Christmas event which included a lantern parade and live music.



Communication Board for Hardings Park

A communication board has been installed at Hardings Park following a request made to the Town Council by a local resident.

A communication board is a device displaying symbols or illustrations to help individuals with limited or no language skills communicate more easily. Different types of communication boards can help children with autism in addition to other disabilities.

Gillingham Town Council aims to make its play areas as accessible as possible. This board will give children who struggle with speech and language an opportunity to have a voice.



A warm welcome to Sara Danesh-Pour, Mayor's Secretary and Customer Service Officer

Sara is delighted to be joining the team at the Town Hall, in the role of Customer Services Officer/Mayor's Secretary.

Previously, Sara enjoyed working as an Administrator at Oxford University on a variety of clinical trials, volunteering for a conservation project in Australia and working at an Orphanage in Malawi

When not running around after her children, Sara loves reading, acting and watching The Voice (though sadly can't sing).

Sara is very much looking forward to meeting you all.



Gillingham Town Council joins the Movember Movement

During November, 5 members of the town council's grounds team and the Mayor, joined the Movember Movement and grew impressively fabulous moustaches to raise awareness for men's health.

Movember is all about breaking the silence and tackling health issues affecting men worldwide. So far, the team have raised £380 which will help fund medical research, groundbreaking tests and trials, life-changing men's health programs and innovative treatments.



Congratulations to Jill on passing CiLCA

Congratulations to Gillingham Town Council's Assistant Town Clerk, Jill Ezzard, for passing her CiLCA qualification.

CiLCA is a qualification that tests an individual's broad knowledge of all the aspects of a clerk's work – roles and responsibilities, the law, procedures, finance, planning and community involvement. This forms part of the criteria for the council to exercise the General Power of Competence.



Gillingham Registrar Retires

In October, we said goodbye to Carol Hookins, Dorset Council Registrar, who retired after 14 years dedicated service.

During her time as registrar in Gillingham, Carol registered over 2,000 deaths and 1,000 births, and married nearly 700 couples. Carol will be greatly missed by all her colleagues and everyone at Gillingham Town Hall. Enjoy your retirement Carol!



Could you be a Community Volunteer Flood Warden?

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer community flood warden for Gillingham?

Our volunteers help support the community before a flood by:

- Identifying problem areas
- Identifying vulnerable people and properties
- Helping to establish a community flood plan
- Monitoring watercourses.

During a flood our volunteers help by:

- Communicating flood risk to the Community
- Co-ordinating Community Flood Plans
- Sharing information from the Environment Agency and Emergency Services with residents
- Encouraging residents to take action.
- Collecting flood information



To find out more please contact Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk on 01747 823588 or email: GTC@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk

GRITTING AND CLEARING SNOW IN GILLINGHAM

Is it ok to clear snow from a road, path or cycleway?

Guidelines from the UK Government say it is ok to clear snow and ice from pavements yourself.

HOW TO CLEAR SNOW AND ICE

When you clear snow and ice:

- do it early in the day – it's easier to move fresh, loose snow;
- don't use water – it might refreeze and turn to black ice;
- use salt if possible – it will melt the ice or snow and stop it from refreezing overnight (but don't use the salt from salting bins as this is used to keep roads clear);
- you can use ash and sand if you don't have enough salt – it will provide grip underfoot;
- pay extra attention when clearing steps and steep pathways – using more salt may help.

Further information is available on the Government website

[Clear snow from a road, path or cycleway - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-from-a-road-path-or-cycleway)

GRIT BINS

Grit bins are available around Gillingham for community use on roads and pavements (not private drives). The locations are as follows:

- Barn Surgery, Newbury
- High Street, at the side of Connells Estate Agents
- The Square
- Queen Street Junction with Bay Road
- High Street Car Park
- Entrance to Lidl Car Park
- Queen Street
- RiversMeet Hardings Lane
- Gyllas Way
- Melbury Court to Thorngrove Footway
- Milestone Way
- Broad Robin Junction to Maple Way
- Wyke Road Junction, Broad Robin
- Marlott Road
- Bay Road Junction, Shreen Way
- Town Hall, School Road

Gillingham Remembers

Gillingham's Remembrance Parade and Service on Sunday 12 November was well supported.

A special thank you to the members of the Gillingham Detachment of Dorset Army Cadets, Gillingham Imperial Silver Band and supporting musicians, all the clubs, organisations and societies who joined the parade.

Thank you to everyone at the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, the Gillingham Branch of the Royal British Legion, the marshals, Cllr Roger Weeks, and the organising committee who work so tirelessly behind the scenes.



Photos by Debbie Brown

A tribute to past Mayor and Freeman the late David Milsted

Gillingham's flag was flown at half-mast and a minute silence was held before the meeting of Gillingham Town Council on 27 November in memory of David Milsted, former Mayor and Freeman of Gillingham who passed away, after a period of treatment for cancer, on 20 November 2023.

An enthusiastic writer, researcher, editor, teacher, fireman and postman, David threw himself into helping the community as a town councillor for 17 years and Mayor of Gillingham in 2011 and 2014.

David served as a Dorset County Councillor and was a District Councillor for North Dorset District Council for 15 years where he was the Liberal Democrat Group Leader and Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. In 2019 David was made an Honorary Alderman of North Dorset.

David was a director of the former Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development Company who operated the Tourist Information Centre in Shaftesbury for nine years, and was a founder member of the Blackmore Vale Credit Union.

As an active member of the Dorset Fire Authority, David was a workstream Chairman for an independent review into the fire and rescue service in England.

During his 'spare' time David enjoyed performing with the Gillingham Arts Workshop and trod the boards as a hilarious Pantomime Dame.

David is survived by his loving wife Annie, his six sons and two grandchildren.

A true champion for our community, David will be greatly missed.

There will be an opportunity for those whose lives were touched by David to join his family in a celebration of his life taking place in Gillingham on Saturday 17th February – further information to follow.



Register to vote

The next election for Dorset Council and Town and Parish Councils will be held on 2 May 2024. The election for the Police and Crime Commissioner in Dorset will also take place on the same date.



Residents in Dorset who are not registered to vote are encouraged to do so now ahead of the local elections. This includes anyone who has moved home or changed their names since the last annual canvass.

Registering is the first step in the voting process. The second is choosing which method to use to vote, either in person, by post, or by appointing someone trusted to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

You can register to vote online on the Dorset Council website – you will need to give your National Insurance number and date of birth.

To check if you are already registered, please contact Electoral Services on 01305 838299 or email elections@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Postal Voting

Voting by post is an easy and convenient way of voting. You can apply to set up a postal vote for just one election, referendum or poll, for example if you're going to be on holiday on polling day, or for a specific period of time or for up to a maximum of 3 years. You can also have your postal vote sent to any address (including overseas). Further information is available on the Dorset Council website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk [Here](#)



Bring photo ID to vote

Voters in England now need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections.

This applies to:

- UK parliamentary elections, including general elections, by-elections and recall petitions
- Local elections and by-elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections

If you don't have accepted photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

Find out more about accepted forms of photo ID, how to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate, and what to expect on polling day on the Electoral Commission website [Here](#)



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:

- Nineteen 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:

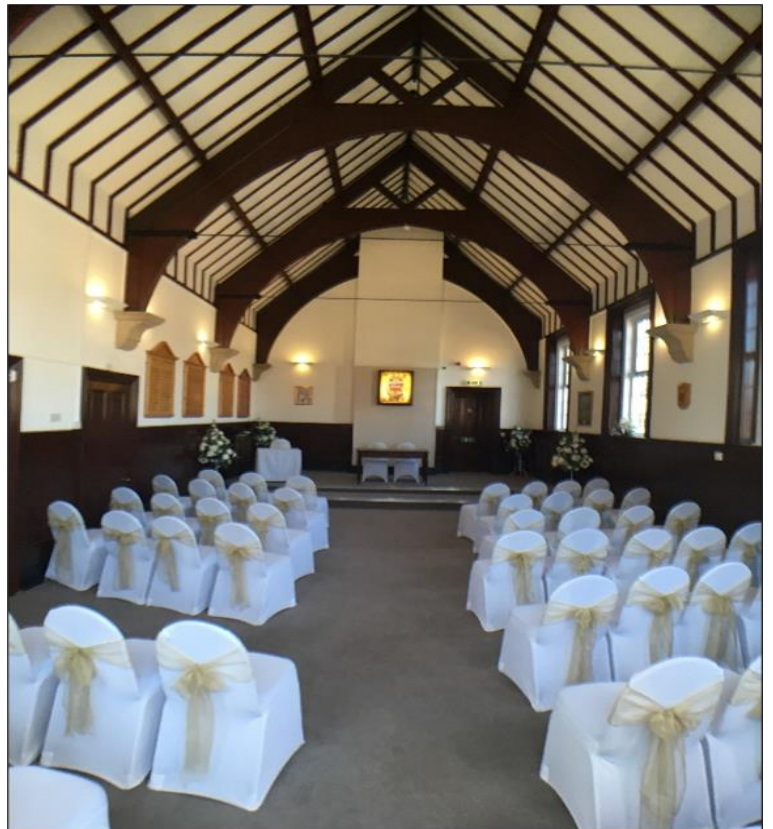
- be on the electoral register for Gillingham; or
- have resided in the parish of Gillingham for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land in the parish; or
- your principal place of work is in the parish; or
- you live within three miles (direct) of the Town Council boundary.

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 60 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 also holds 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.

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



Gillingham Town Councillor Surgeries

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

Next Surgeries:

Monday 8th January
Monday 5th February
Monday 4th March

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



Dorset
Council

Are you
interested in a
paid role at our
polling stations
in May 2024?

Find out more and register your interest here



[dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
working-at-elections](https://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/working-at-elections)

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



MAKE A DIFFERENCE BECOME A COUNCILLOR



Gillingham Town Council Elections ~ 2 May 2024

Join us at one of our information sessions at

Gillingham Town Hall

to find out how you could become a councillor

Monday 29 January 7pm

Tuesday 20 February 6pm

Wednesday 13 March 1pm

For further information please contact
the Town Hall on 01747 823588

Milton-on-Stour needs you



Make a difference become a councillor

For Milton-on-Stour

Join us at one of our information sessions at

Gillingham Town Hall

to find out how you could become a councillor

Monday 29 January 7pm

Tuesday 20 February 6pm

Wednesday 13 March 1pm

For further information please contact
the Town Hall on 01747 823588

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

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

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	Sara Danish-Pour
Works Manager	Simon Dobie
Deputy Works Manager	Martin Down



In memory of David Milsted
Past Mayor and Freeman of Gillingham
1954 - 2023