

District Council Update

Please accept my apologies for not being able to attend this meeting. Unfortunately, I am at multiple other meetings at the same time and therefore won't be able to be there.

I wanted to provide a brief update on a few issues that I know residents have been contacting me about.

Local Plan

The Local Plan is moving towards its next important stage, with the Local Plan Sub-Committee meeting on **17 September**, followed by **Full Council on 21 September**.

The plan will then be subject to the next stage of public consultation, so I would encourage residents to take the opportunity to look at the proposals and make their views known.

I want to be open about my own position. **I do not support development on Green Belt land**, and I have concerns about the scale and location of some of the proposed development.

However, I also want to make clear that I will approach the formal process properly and with an open mind. My position on protecting Green Belt does not mean that I have predetermined how I will consider the plan or any individual proposals. I will listen to residents, consider the evidence presented, look at the infrastructure implications and take account of the consultation responses before making any formal decision.

If Full Council approves the plan for the next stage, there will then be a further formal public consultation, giving residents and organisations another opportunity to comment.

I would also encourage residents who are interested in the Local Plan to attend the **Full Council meeting on 21 September**. Members of the public can view proceedings from the public gallery, and it is a good opportunity to see the democratic process for yourself and hear the debate.

New Bin Collection System

I am continuing to receive emails from residents about the new waste collection system.

The Council has said that a review of the new arrangements will take place and that, where residents meet the relevant criteria, the proposed solution may be to provide additional bins.

While I welcome the fact that the Council is reviewing the situation, **I do not believe simply providing more bins is necessarily the right answer**.

I think we also need to look carefully at the **collection dates and frequency of collections** and whether the current timetable is actually working for residents.

If the review is going to be meaningful, it needs to look at the whole system rather than simply asking residents to accommodate the current arrangements by having additional bins.

I will continue to raise the concerns being brought to me and will be pressing for the review to properly consider whether changes to the collection schedule could provide a better solution.

Community Tree Planting Grant

Finally, I want to make residents, parish councils, schools and community groups aware of a new **£75,000 Community Tree Planting Grant Fund** launched by Braintree District Council.

I think this is a really positive and practical measure to improve our local area, enhance our communities and create spaces that residents can enjoy.

Grants are available in three categories:

- **Small grants:** £0–£1,000
- **Medium grants:** £1,001–£5,000
- **Large grants:** £5,001–£15,000

The funding can support tree planting projects on public, community, school, parish, charitable or privately owned land, provided there is appropriate permission and a clear community benefit.

Projects can range from planting individual trees through to larger community planting schemes. Funding can also include complementary native bulb planting, such as daffodils, bluebells, snowdrops and crocuses, up to 10% of the total grant value.

An important part of the scheme is making sure that trees survive and thrive, so applicants will need to demonstrate how they intend to care for the trees during the first two years after planting.

Applications are now open and the deadline is midnight on Sunday 11 October 2026.

I would encourage any parish council, school, community group or local organisation that has an idea for a suitable project to look into the scheme. I particularly support practical initiatives like this that can make a visible difference to our communities.

More information and the application form are available on the Braintree District Council website: [Community Tree Planting Grant Fund](#)

Thank you all and I look forward to seeing you all soon

Cllr Nathan Robins