

contact

2023

residents' magazine



Supporting
communities
in the cost of
living crisis

SEE INSIDE:

How we are tackling fly-tipping





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keep in touch with us



www.braintree.gov.uk



Braintree District Council



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Braintree District Council,
Causeway House, Braintree,
Essex CM7 9HB



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IF YOU REQUIRE THIS DOCUMENT IN ANOTHER FORMAT,
PLEASE CALL 01376 552525

Nurturing the community spirit in our district



Even though winter is coming to an end, the cost of living is still at the forefront of all our minds.

Local authorities are also facing a cost of operating crisis and council finances are under more pressure than ever, coupled with extra demand on council services.

Although good financial management over the years has put us in a better position than others, it does not make us immune to having to make some tough decisions.

We want to limit the impact on services as much as possible by making savings and maximising income to ensure we support those who need it most and protect the services residents rely on.

Our priorities for 2023/24 will focus on supporting the most vulnerable with cost-of-living support and investing in the things that matter to you.

This year, £1million will be invested to support those who need it most by providing food security, supporting community groups/organisations and enabling physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Additional support of up to £25 will also be provided to all eligible council taxpayers through a New Homes and Growth Dividend.

To ensure we balance those factors with the need to protect services and provide much-needed growth and stability in the budget, council tax will be increased by an average of 9p per week based on a Band D property. Ensuring our element of council tax was as low as possible was a real priority for us.

We achieved so much in 2022 – you can find a snapshot on page 15. 2023 will continue to bring more change, but also new opportunities for us to provide a thriving and sustainable future for current and future generations.

Councillor Graham Butland

Leader of Braintree District Council



EASE THE SQUEEZE



Cost of living advice is available on www.braintree.gov.uk/costofliving or call **01376 552525** for a printed copy.



The warmth here comes from the company as much as the radiators. Local groups and volunteers have come together to provide social spaces for people to meet others, keep warm, eat, drink and access useful advice and information.

The Community Living Room in Feering Community Centre was set up in October 2022, prompted by Parish Clerk Lisa Collins. Lisa said:

“There are no cafes or shops in the village, so without transport it can be difficult to get out and about to meet others. Feering didn’t have a regular event or club like nearby villages, so we set this up for people to meet, not just for warmth but to have some company and not be lonely.”

On January 11, they hosted Phil Manning - a volunteer at the Tollesbury Climate Partnership - who was invited by Cllr Katherine Evans. Phil provided information about easy energy saving measures and grants available to help reduce energy use at home.

Cllr Paul Lees, Chairman of Feering Parish Council, said:

“It’s about everyone coming together on a regular basis and we’d like to be able to offer that educational aspect sometimes, like today with the Energy Café.”

Warm spaces are operating across the district. A list and map is available on our website to find your nearest one:
www.braintree.gov.uk/warmspaces



Make *the* change



Sometimes the conversations around climate change can seem overwhelming and often it can feel as though you can't make a huge difference. **But you can.**

Changing how we travel is the biggest way we can help tackle climate change. So that means using public transport more and using our cars less. It also means walking and cycling more. The other significant way you can make a difference is by eating less meat and wasting less food.

Here are five ways you can help tackle the climate crisis:

1

Download an app to **track your carbon footprint.**



2

Reduce the amount you use your car. Swap a few car journeys out and walk and cycle instead. Or take the bus.



3

Eat more locally sourced food and buy seasonal produce. Introduce a meat free day each week.



4

Download an anti-food waste app such as Olio and Too Good To Go.



5

Consider buying an electric car - you can rest assured that the Braintree District is well served for electric charging points.



DID YOU KNOW?

Cycling to work can mean you have a

46%
lower risk of
cardiovascular
disease



There are currently

116
EV charging points
for public use
in our district.

www.braintree.gov.uk/chargingpoints



Tell us what you are doing to protect the environment

@climatechange@braintree.gov.uk

www.braintree.gov.uk/climatechange



Composting is a natural process that turns your food and garden waste into soil improver for your garden.

By composting at home, you can reduce the amount of waste needed to be processed elsewhere. To purchase a subsidised compost bin for your garden, visit getcomposting.com



Grants for energy efficiency

Funding is available for low income and energy inefficient homes. The money can be used on energy saving measures such as insulation and heating systems. Please contact the Energy Advice team at Braintree District Council on **01376 552525** @energyadvice@braintree.gov.uk

Are you a community group leader?

We have a list of grants specifically for you. @climatechange@braintree.gov.uk

Rewilding across the district



We have been busy planting bulbs and native tree whips in locations within our district as part of our rewilding programme.

We have planted **4,000 bulbs** such as daffodils and snowdrops

in Halstead Public Gardens and Forest Road in Witham.

The flowers are set to bloom this Spring and will encourage pollinators and biodiversity and bring a colourful display for people to enjoy.



At Parklands in Braintree we have planted 1,300 native tree whips which will grow into mature trees for the benefit of future generations.



Get greater value from your food



We are working in partnership with councils across Essex to reduce food waste in our county.

Food waste is contributing to climate change and damaging the environment. But on top of that, it's a huge waste of money!

SIGN the Essex Food Waste Pledge and complete monthly challenges to be entered into competitions to **WIN £60** in supermarket vouchers. Find out more at: www.loveessex.org/foodpledge

Simple ways to save food, save money and save our planet.

TIP1 Put your fruit bowl in the fridge. With the exception of bananas and uncut pineapples, your fruit will stay fresher for longer if kept below 5°C.

TIP2 Eat me first fridge shelf. Keep food close to the end of its life at the front of your shelf. It's easier to see and better than being forgotten at the back.

TIP3 Get date label savvy. Learn what date labels mean. 'Use by' is about food safety. 'Best before' is about food quality.

Check out www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for more top tips on the best ways to handle your food at home.

Fighting fly-tipping

We take fly-tipping very seriously with a zero tolerance approach. We will always respond within 24 hours to remove the waste.



If you ask a third party to dispose of your waste, stop and think about your Duty of Care responsibilities. Always ask to see their Waste Carriers Registration Number issued by the Environment Agency and vehicle details before they remove your waste. Failure to do this may result in the you being held liable for an offence and fined.

Report fly-tipping, dumped rubbish or litter: www.braintree.gov.uk/flytipping or call 01376 552525

During 2022:

680 incidents were reported and cleaned ranging from small to commercial sized fly-tips

Issued **37** fixed penalty notices for littering, smoking in a smoke free zone and breaking Duty of Care

13 cases sent for prosecution in court



Less waste means money saved

The average Essex household wastes £60 a month by throwing away food that could have been eaten

To save food and money, visit loveessex.org/foodpledge



Completion reached

on Braintree's £30m Victoria Square regeneration

An official ceremony held during the final quarter of last year marked the completion of build on the Victoria Square regeneration in Braintree's town centre.

The £30m mixed-use scheme includes:

- 35 affordable homes with 23 shared ownership and 12 social rent
- 70-bed Travelodge
- A restaurant or café and retail unit

- A pharmacy
- A Livewell hub with capacity to serve 20,000 patients
- A new modern bus interchange with added capacity
- Public toilets
- A garden and plaza area to complement the Town Hall
- A twin-level car park

Mixed-use developments are beneficial because they bring economic, social and environmental gains into town centres and communities.



Our investment into amenities, services and homes is attracting visitors, supporting residents and businesses and creating jobs. It's the beginning of a transformation which we believe will attract investment and revitalise and enhance the vibrancy of our town.

Cllr Kevin Bowers,
Cabinet Member for
Housing, Assets & Skills



www.locatebraintreedistrict.co.uk



Planning application submitted for Witham's

£4 million Community centre

Plans to build a new multi-purpose community centre on Haygreen Road in Witham have been put forward.

The proposals for the two-storey building include a mixed-use hall, kitchen, bar area and changing rooms to serve sports players using the adjacent football pitch.

People will be able to use the hall to play sports, attend meetings or go to social clubs.



the plaza
Braintree

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www.theplazacentre.co.uk



Supporting *our* Ukrainian community

Over 220 Ukrainians have settled into the Braintree district community as they fled from the devastating war in their country.

Our programme of monthly community catch ups hosted by Braintree Community Centre have provided a safe space for guests to benefit from free English language classes, information on local services and an opportunity to meet and talk to others and share experiences.



Claire and her husband Adrian

became sponsors as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and offered their Braintree home up to their guests Nataliia and Anastasiia since May 2022.

“Being able to offer a safe place to live we have found a very rewarding experience, we also get a lot of enjoyment out of it. We all get along together very well and have made lifelong friendships. One day we hope to visit them and their families in a safe Ukraine.”



Thank you to the 103 households who have opened up their homes for refugees. If you would like to offer a home to people fleeing Ukraine, consider becoming a sponsor as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. You can register your interest at www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine



Peter and Jan Kohn from Coggeshall have been sponsoring a mother and daughter from Odessa.

“We are lucky to get on well with our guests who have become part of the family. Many people in the local community have rallied round providing help with English, maths, yoga, and dentistry and that has been incredibly valuable. Braintree District Council were prompt with the welcome payment and have organised English lessons that have provided both English and a support group for Ukrainians who might otherwise feel isolated.”

 www.braintree.gov.uk/ukraine



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There's no place like home

As our population grows and people are living longer, and more people wanting to live in the district, there is ultimately a need for more housing. This isn't just more housing, but decent, sustainable and genuinely affordable housing. It's the foundations of people's lives.

Good quality homes are essential to health and wellbeing. This is a key priority for us as we continue to work with our partners to support the current and future housing offer and needs of those in our district.

Helpful housing information

Disabled Facility Grants

www.braintree.gov.uk/housing/disabled-facilities-grants

Help to Buy Home Ownership scheme

www.braintree.gov.uk/housing/help-buy-home-ownership-scheme

Major housing grants for installing or repairing hot water or heating systems

01376 552525

housingservices@braintree.gov.uk

Discretionary housing payment – extra financial help with your housing costs

www.braintree.gov.uk/benefits/apply-discretionary-housing-payment

Empty homes

[@emptyhomes@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@braintree.gov.uk)

DID YOU KNOW

There are **2,000 empty homes** in our district and we will be exploring ways to work with homeowners to reduce this number.



Disabled Facility Grants are available to make home adaptations to help people remain living independently.



Between 2017–2022, **1,159 affordable homes** were completed, with 417 in 2021-22 alone – our highest yearly total yet.



We require **30-40%** of new housing developments to be affordable.



COUNCIL BUDGET

AT A GLANCE...

We deliver over **100 services** for **£3.74 per week**

Here's a breakdown of some we delivered last year...



176 people used the **Councils Handyman scheme**



Received and validated **3,088** **planning applications**



Provided support to **867** **businesses**



139 **grants** were processed in 2022



734 **fly tips** cleared



8.3 million refuse & recycling collections



Carried out **226,000** collections of waste from dog and litter bins



Over **350** **affordable homes** delivered



Dealt with **143,454** **enquiries** to our Customer Service Centre



We've helped prevent more than **250** **homelessness cases**



Supported **225** **Ukrainian guests**



Being prepared

is important, whether it's for a power cut, severe weather or flooding.

Here's some tips and advice to help you prepare and care.

Keep a mobile phone fully charged so

you can use it to go online for updates or call friends and family if you need to.



Have warm clothes and blankets

available to layer up if needed.



Check in on neighbours, family and friends

whenever you can – do they have a plan in place?



Ask your local network operator about the **Priority Services Register**.

The energy networks can help if you have additional needs because of your medical or personal circumstances.



Consider an emergency home kit with

things such as a torch, radio, first aid kit, water, toiletries, a phone charging bank, tinned or packed food and spare batteries.



Sign up to our emergency planning FREE newsletter

Join over 6,800 subscribers already signed up to our emergency planning e-newsletter.

Receive the latest updates on emergency situations, severe weather and tips and advice on how you can be prepared.
www.braintree.gov.uk/tellmemore

Damp and mould advice



With the rising cost of living and many households concerned about turning on their heating due to rising energy costs, more homes may be at risk of mould and damp.

Mould can damage your home and impact your health.

Read our online guide for information and advice on managing damp, condensation, and mould at www.braintree.gov.uk/mould

Handy websites and numbers

Sign up for free text message flood warnings if your home is at risk of flooding at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings or call 0345 988 1188 (24-hour service)

Save 105 to your phone, the free national power cut emergency number and 0800 111 999, the free national gas emergency number

BRAINTREE DISTRICT LOCAL ELECTIONS 2023

REGISTER TO VOTE

Local elections in the Braintree district are taking place on **Thursday 4 May 2023**. This is your chance to decide the future of the district.

Are you registered to vote?

The deadline to register to vote is **Monday 17 April 2023**.

The deadline to register for a new postal vote is 5pm on **Tuesday 18 April 2023** and 5pm on **Tuesday 25 April 2023** for a new proxy vote.

For more information, visit www.braintree.gov.uk/elections, email elections@braintree.gov.uk or call **01376 552525**.

Remember

At these elections, you will need to bring photo ID to be able to vote at a polling station.

Acceptable forms of photo ID include a passport, driving licence, a blue badge, Oyster 60+ card or UK Biometric Residence Permit.

Visit the GOV.UK website for a full list of photo ID that will be accepted.

No ID?

You can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate by visiting www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or contact the Elections team. The deadline to apply is 5pm on Tuesday 25 April 2023.

For more information about Voter ID visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call 0800 328 0280.



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The Plaza, 1 Rutherford Park,
Braintree, CM77 7AU

How satisfied are you? with Braintree District Council

Survey

Your feedback is important to us so we know how we are doing - whether you are satisfied with the main services we provide and if you think we are providing value for money.

Closing date to respond by is Friday 31 March 2023.

1 How satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Fairly satisfied
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

3b Recycling & Waste Collections?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Fairly satisfied
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

2 Overall, how satisfied are you with the way Braintree District Council runs things?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Fairly satisfied
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

3c Parks and Open Spaces?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Fairly satisfied
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

3 How satisfied are you with each of the following main services provided by Braintree District Council:

3a Keeping our District clear of litter?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Fairly satisfied
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

3d Do you use the Council's leisure facilities? If so are you...

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Fairly satisfied
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Do not use Sports/Leisure facilities

4 To what extent do you agree that Braintree District Council provides value for money?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

5 How informed do you feel about the services available from Braintree District Council?

- ☐ Very informed
- ☐ Fairly informed
- ☐ Fairly uninformed
- ☐ Very uninformed
- ☐ Neither informed nor uninformed

6 Braintree District Council produces email updates on a range of topics you can choose from, e.g. job alerts, refuse & recycling, planning, events and news. Would you like to sign up for this service?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please supply your email address in the box on the right. (You can opt out at any time)

You can complete this survey online
www.braintree.gov.uk/css2022-23

7 Would you like to receive text messages about service updates, bank holiday bin collections, special announcements, offers and customer feedback requests?

- ☐ Yes, I am happy to receive text messages from the Council
- ☐ No, I do not wish to receive text messages

If yes, please supply your house number/name, postcode and mobile number in the box below.

So we can analyse the data, as a minimum, please let us know which town/village you live in.

Name:

House number/name:

Town/Village:

Postcode:

Contact number:

Email:

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
 ☐ Prefer not to say

Age group: ☐ 16-24 ☐ 25-44
 ☐ 45-64 ☐ 65-79
 ☐ 80+ ☐ Prefer not to say

Date:

Please recycle this when you have finished with it.

BRACERCIZ

DATA PROTECTION

Braintree District Council is a data controller for the purposes for data protection. Some of the details you provide on this form may be personal data, which will be stored and used by the Council in relation to this project.

For further details on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information and your rights, including how to access information we hold on you and how to complain if you have any concerns about how your personal details are processed, please visit www.braintree.gov.uk/privacy. By completing this form, you are providing your consent for the Council to store and use the personal data you have provided.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Please return to Freepost plus address below (no stamp necessary):
Freepost plus RTHE-ABHH-BUUA, Marketing & Communications Team,
Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9BR