

## Report from District Councillor Iona Parker for 29 November PC meeting

Below is a brief report:

- Budget - BDC has started the budget setting process for the forthcoming year. This year we are facing very difficult circumstances with increased costs due to inflation, increase in fuel costs and a larger than anticipated pay award, as well as some loss of income e.g. car parking charges. The Council is in a better position than many, due to sound financial management over preceding years, but in order to produce a balanced budget we are having to look at making some cost savings and dip into our reserves. No decisions have been made yet on Council tax. I will report further on this in due course.
- Cost of living - I have circulated a note on measures to help, in particular, low income families, with the increase in the cost of living.
- Consultations - Please be aware of the consultation from Transport East on rural connectivity and transport in rural areas seeking views of parish councils, information previously circulated.
- Essex Forest initiative - I note that this programme will now cover anyone who has land which is suitable and is not restricted to Council owned land. Please see this link for further information <https://www.essex.gov.uk/the-essex-forest-initiative>
- Road signs - I had a very useful meeting with a highways officer recently to try to make progress on the deer signage requested under the local highways panel for Belchamp Road near Mashey Wood. I am hoping that this will now be approved.

Iona Parker

### [The Essex Forest Initiative - Essex County Council](#)

The Essex Forest Initiative. In October 2019, we committed to plant £1million worth of trees over the next five years. This will include planting 375,000 trees, over 150 hectares, equivalent to the size of 210 football pitches.

[www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)