

Castle Point Together

Inside your
summer 2026
issue...

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Sport funding helps
residents get active

Castle Point
Plan update

Multi-million investment in play areas

Upgrades happening across the Borough

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Coming this autumn!



Welcome to Castle Point Together

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Cover image:
Benfleet Yacht club



Delivering the services that matter most to residents



It is a pleasure to introduce this latest edition of **Castle Point Together**, which is now moving to a quarterly update. In this issue we highlight real progress against the priorities set out in our **Corporate Plan**. Across Castle Point, we are focused on strengthening our communities, improving the places you live and delivering the services that matter most to residents.

You will see how we are investing in our town centres, with work now underway to regenerate Knightswick Shopping Centre, an important step in supporting local businesses and creating vibrant spaces for residents. At the same time, we are taking action to protect and enhance our

environment, including a programme of targeted work to improve Canvey Lake starting this summer and our continued push towards higher recycling standards through upcoming changes to collections this autumn.

We are also proud of the progress made in housing, reflected in our upgrade from the Regulator of Social Housing, demonstrating our commitment to providing safe, quality homes.

These achievements show what can be delivered through clear priorities and strong partnerships and we remain committed to building on this progress for the benefit of our communities.

Cllr Dave Blackwell – Leader

Achieving the ambitions set out in our Corporate Plan



This edition showcases how we are continuing to deliver on the ambitions set out in our **Corporate Plan**, with a strong focus on creating opportunities, supporting healthy lives and looking after our local area for the long term.

We are making important progress in shaping the future of Castle Point, including the next stage in the examination of the Castle Point Plan, helping ensure we plan responsibly for growth while protecting the Green Belt. Supporting healthier, more active lifestyles is also a priority, and it's great to see how Sport England funding is helping more of our residents get involved in physical activity.

We are equally proud of our environmental progress, including work to secure official bathing water status for Thorney Bay Foreshore, an important milestone for our coastline. Alongside this multi-million investment in play spaces is creating better places for children and families to enjoy and to encourage active lifestyles.

These successes reflect our commitment to improving quality of life for all residents, and we will continue working to ensure Castle Point remains a place people are proud to call home.

Cllr Warren Gibson – Deputy Leader



Transformation underway at Knightswick Shopping Centre

Work is now underway to transform Knightswick Shopping Centre in Canvey Island, marking a major step forward in plans to revitalise the town centre.

Improvements will include new flooring, ceilings and lighting, upgraded entrances, improved accessibility and the introduction of Wi-Fi and digital screens to enhance the shopping experience.

The £2 million refurbishment project, funded by Castle Point Borough Council, will upgrade the centre into a brighter, safer and more welcoming space for residents, visitors and local businesses.



The centre will remain open as usual throughout the works, with most construction work taking place outside normal trading hours to minimise disruption.

The project is continuing through the summer with the improvements expected to be completed by the autumn.

Follow us on Facebook for regular progress updates.
[@castlepoint.broughcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/castlepoint.broughcouncil)



Action underway to improve Canvey Lake

Work is progressing to improve and protect Canvey Lake, with a programme of both short-term actions and longer-term plans now underway.

Improvements starting this summer include work to enhance water quality and support wildlife, helping improve the Lake's natural environment. Water testing and ongoing monitoring will also continue over the warmer months.

Looking ahead, more significant work is planned, including dredging works in winter 2026 to remove built-up silt and improve the Lake's overall condition.

The programme aims to address immediate concerns while delivering lasting improvements, with dedicated funding in place to support the Lake as an important community and environmental asset for the future. For the latest updates as the plan progresses visit www.castlepoint.gov.uk/w/canvey-lake

Scheduled maintenance

summer

- ▶ preparation for desilting (dredging)
- ▶ ongoing monitoring and treatments
- ▶ BioX applied to reduce algae growth
- ▶ habitat improvements start
- ▶ Lake surveys carried out



autumn

- ▶ habitat improvements continue
- ▶ removal of fish to alternative environment



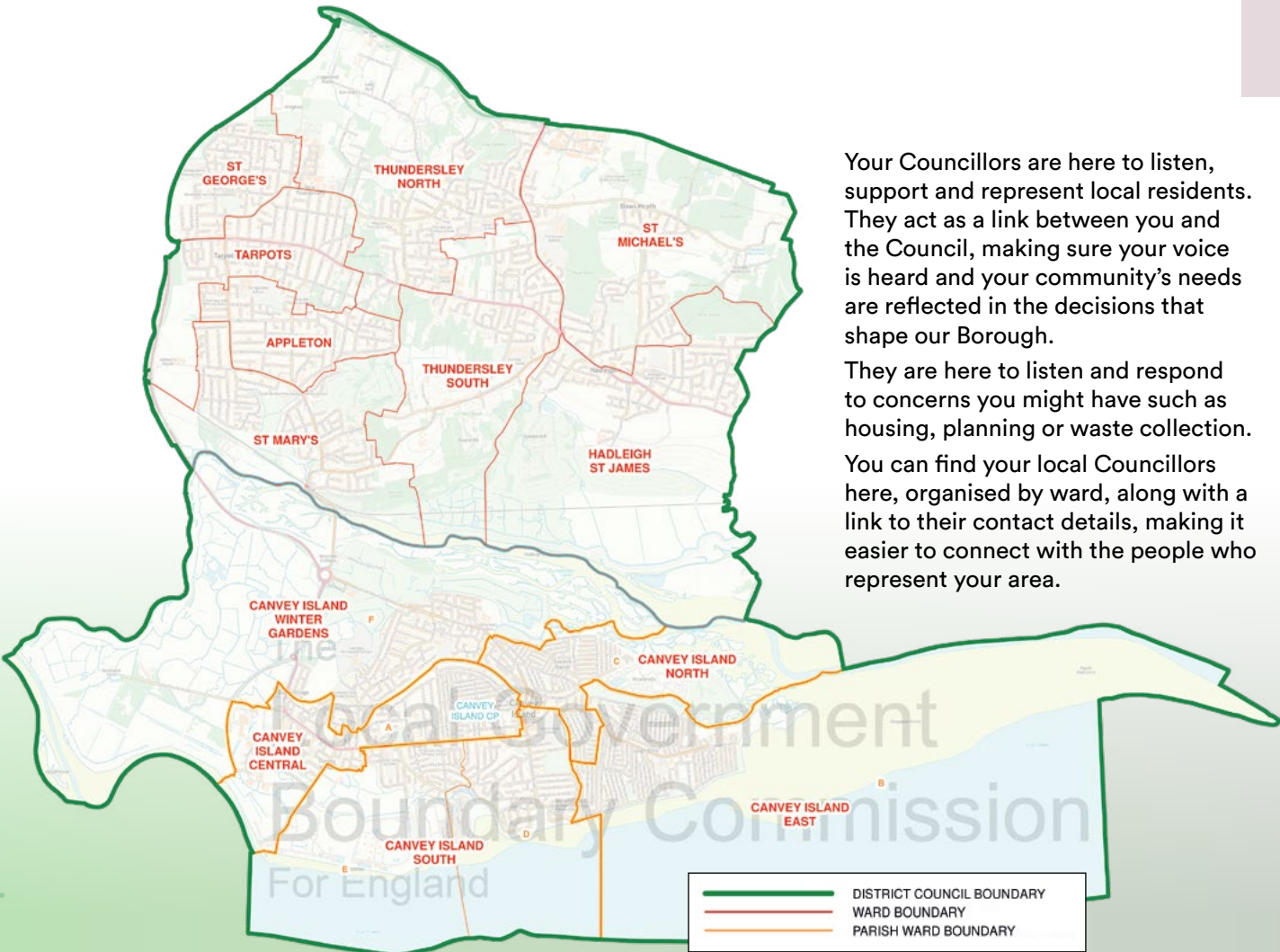
winter

- ▶ winter treatment applied
- ▶ monitoring continues
- ▶ desilting (dredging)



Meet your Councillors

Castle Point Borough Council is made up of 39 elected Councillors, each representing and championing the communities they serve and that includes you!



Your Councillors are here to listen, support and represent local residents. They act as a link between you and the Council, making sure your voice is heard and your community’s needs are reflected in the decisions that shape our Borough.

They are here to listen and respond to concerns you might have such as housing, planning or waste collection. You can find your local Councillors here, organised by ward, along with a link to their contact details, making it easier to connect with the people who represent your area.



Cabinet appointments – 2026/27	
Areas of responsibility	Appointment
Leader	Cllr Dave Blackwell
Deputy Leader (Devolution and LGR)	Cllr Warren Gibson
Economic Growth & Climate Action	Cllr Barry Palmer
Environment	Cllr Michael Fuller
Health, Wellbeing & Housing	Cllr Rob Lillis
People & Community	Cllr Russ Savage
Resources	Cllr Steve Mountford
Special Projects & Assets	Cllr Tom Gibson
Strategic Planning	Cllr Tim Copsey
Mayor	Cllr Kate Knott
Deputy Mayor	Cllr Michael Dearson

Contact details for all Councillors can be found by scanning the QR code or visiting the Council’s website.



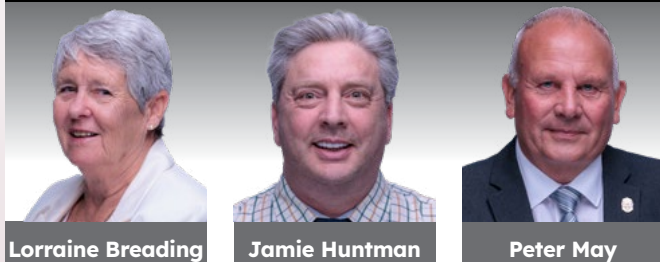
Canvey Island Independent Party (CIIP) x 14

The People's Independent Party (PIP) x 24

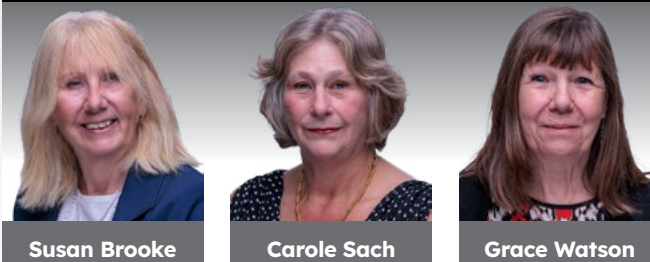
Reform Party x1

Leader of the Council (L) • Deputy Leader of the Council (DL) • Essex County Councillor (CC)

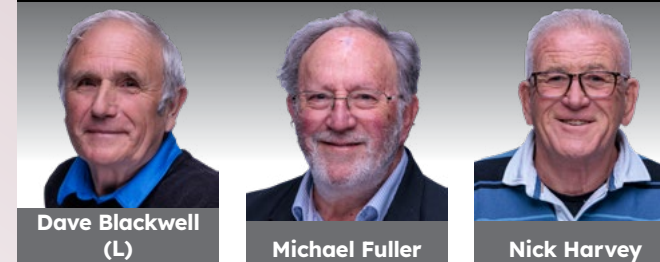
Canvey Island Central



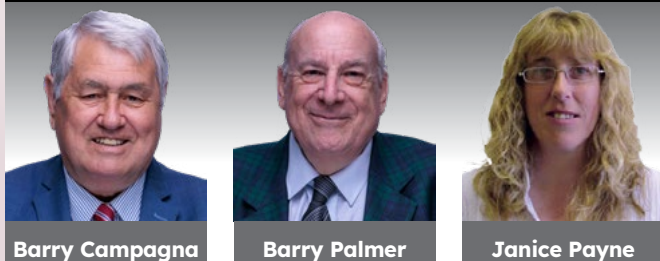
Canvey Island East



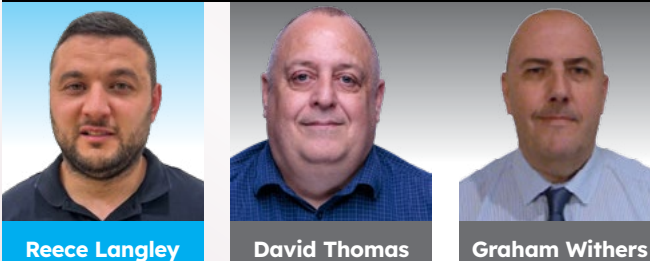
Canvey Island North



Canvey Island South



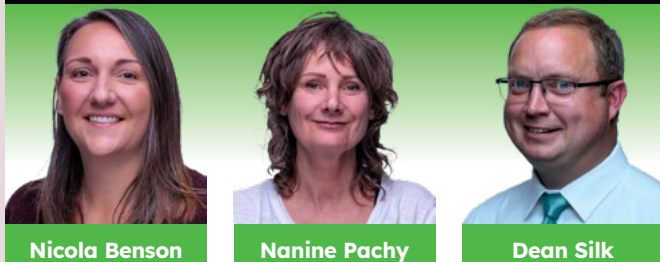
Canvey Island Winter Gardens



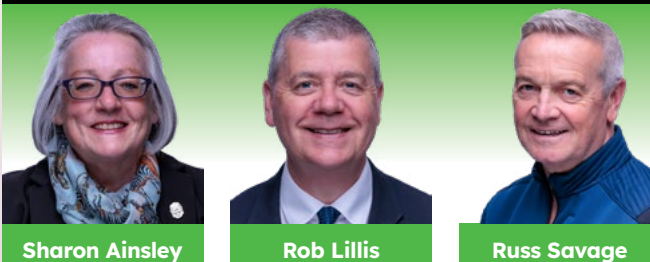
Hadleigh St. James



St. George's



St. Mary's



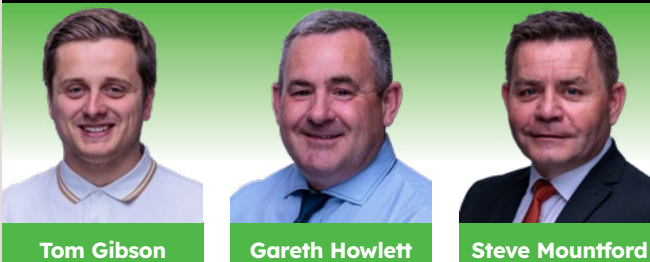
St. Michael's



Tarpots



Thundersley North



Thundersley South





Progress made in housing standards

Castle Point Borough Council has taken a positive step forward, with the Regulator of Social Housing upgrading its Consumer Standard grading from C4 to C3. The new rating recognises clear progress, particularly in strengthening health and safety and improving the condition of homes for tenants.

The decision reflects the Council's focused work over the past year, including bringing key services back in-house and improving oversight of

repairs and housing data. While there is still more to do, especially around tenant engagement and transparency, the direction of travel is very positive.

The Council has welcomed the news as a sign its Housing Improvement Programme is working and remains committed to building on this momentum in the months ahead as it works towards a further regulatory upgrade.

Help and advice on housing options

If you are worried about your housing situation, help is available from our Housing Options team.

The service is designed to support residents who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Anyone in this situation is encouraged to seek advice as early as possible, ideally within 56 days of losing their home.

The team can offer practical support to help residents stay in their current

home, including advice on tenancy issues, mortgage concerns or relationship breakdown. If staying in your home isn't possible, they can help you to explore alternative housing options.

Visit www.castlepoint.gov.uk and search 'housing advice' to complete a short form. A member of the team will be in touch as soon as possible.

Castle Point Plan examination update

Protecting the Borough's Green Belt and ensuring future development benefits and enhances existing Castle Point communities is at the heart of the Council's approach to strategic planning.

In September, planning inspectors will review the Council's proposed Castle Point Plan. This is the core document which will act as a framework to inform planning decisions and guide development in the Borough up to 2043.

The examination in public will initially look at the number of homes being built in the Borough over the next 17 years.

The Government has said it believes the Borough is able to sustain building 11,662 homes over this period, which equates to 686 per year. The Council argues strongly that this figure is far too high and poses a risk to the Green Belt, the local environment, and the fabric of existing communities. It has put forward a figure of 6,196, or 364 homes a year.

Cllr Warren Gibson, Deputy Leader of the Council, said: "When we took

office we pledged we would create a plan which reflected the vision residents in Castle Point have for their communities and protected our valuable Green Belt amenity.

"We have done this and produced a plan which is evidence based, reflects the needs and aspirations of residents and businesses and has a figure for the number of houses to be built which is realistic and prevents Green Belt incursion."

Once inspectors have concluded the initial part of the examination in September, they will determine whether the Plan's approach to housing is appropriate or if changes are necessary. There is a risk that inspectors could require amendments to the housing number, potentially imposing a higher requirement.

Cllr Warren Gibson continued: "Whatever the outcome, we will continue to live up to our promise to fight for what is right for our communities and protect our Green Belt."





Helping Canvey Island to stay active

Canvey Island is benefiting from an investment of almost £1 million from Sport England, helping to create more opportunities for people to be active, feel healthier and stay connected.

The programme began in November 2025 and is being delivered by Castle Point Borough Council, alongside local organisations, activity providers and community groups.

The focus is on making it easier for people of all ages to take part in activities, especially in areas where opportunities have been limited in the past.

There are already lots of free and low-cost activities taking place across the island, including:

- free Park Tennis at King George V Playing Fields
- community use of The Gunny
- youth sessions at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre
- free bikes for eligible young people through Essex Pedal Power
- exercise and wellbeing classes at The Paddocks and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre
- “Let’s Keep Moving” sessions at local community venues
- school projects supporting young people’s confidence and wellbeing
- specialist support for young people, including those with ADHD
- activities helping young people build skills and confidence

- gardening clubs at Yellow Door
- support groups for people with heart health concerns

The weekly parkrun at Thorney Bay has also been a big hit. Taking place every Saturday, it’s a friendly, free event where people can walk, jog or run at their own pace. It’s all made possible thanks to local volunteers.

So far, there have been over 5,000 attendances across activities, showing just how much people are getting involved.

Coming Soon: Active on Thames – Canvey Island

A new programme, Active on Thames, is launching this summer, making the most of Canvey Island’s beautiful coastline.

Planned activities include sea wall walks, beach volleyball for young people, beach yoga and sessions exploring local wildlife. There are also plans to introduce activities like open water swimming and paddleboarding in the future.

The aim is to help people get active, enjoy the outdoors and meet others in the community.

To stay up to date and find out how to get involved, follow Castle Point Active on social media.



Changes to waste and recycling collections coming this autumn

Since spring 2026, new government legislation means all households must separate recycling and food waste from general rubbish.

To meet these requirements, Castle Point Borough Council is introducing a new separate waste collection service for paper and card.

The new service will roll out in two phases:

- From 5 October 2026 for homes with Friday collections
- From 2 November 2026 for homes with Monday to Thursday collections

Under the new system, pink sacks will continue to be used for most recycling, with the addition of soft plastics and plastic film. A new blue sack will be introduced for paper and card only.

Pink and the new blue sacks will be delivered to homes up to one month before the changes begin so residents are ready for the new service. More detailed information will be provided before the roll-out begins this autumn.



Let's play - new play areas for family fun

Families across Castle Point can look forward to exciting improvements to local parks as the Council delivers a £1 million programme to upgrade play areas this year. Work began in April and will continue throughout the summer, with completion expected by the end of September.

This major investment is bringing new, imaginative play equipment, improved sports facilities and the Borough's first fully accessible playground, helping ensure children of all abilities can enjoy high-quality outdoor spaces.

Upgrades in this phase include:

- castle-themed play tower at Hadleigh Memorial Park
- ship-themed playground at Richmond Park
- new multi-use games areas at Woodside Park and Thundersley Common Recreation Ground
- fully inclusive playground at South Benfleet Playing Fields designed to meet a wide range of needs

Looking ahead, more improvements are planned through a further £1.4 million investment.



The next phase will include refurbishment of the multi-use games area at King George Playing Fields, alongside playground regeneration at sites in Benfleet and Canvey Island. These include King George V Playing Fields (Shipwrights Drive and Poplar Road), Woodside Park, Leigh Beck Open Space and additional improvements at South Benfleet Playing Fields.

Together, these investments will create more welcoming, modern and inclusive spaces for children, young people and families to enjoy across the Borough.



Canvey makes a splash with new bathing water status

There's great news for Canvey Island as the Foreshore has officially been granted designated bathing water status.

It follows a successful bid by Castle Point Borough Council with strong local support and partnership work from groups including Southend Against Sewage, Thorney Bay Swimming, Rainbow Swimmers and Move to Improve with Sandra. This nationally recognised status means the beach will now benefit from regular water quality testing and clearer information for residents and visitors.

It follows a national consultation led by the Government and means Canvey is now included on England's official list of bathing waters. Each year between 15 May and 30 September, the Environment Agency will test the water and publish results, helping people make informed choices about when and where to swim.

Visitors will also see improved signage along the seafront, providing up-to-date information

about water quality. Over time, this monitoring will build a clearer picture of conditions and support further improvements to the coastline.

This is a major milestone for the Borough, reflecting strong local support and partnership working with community groups and campaigners. The new status not only helps protect public health and the environment but also boosts confidence in Canvey's seafront as an asset for tourism and the local economy.

Residents can view the latest water quality results and updates in real time on the Council's website:

www.castlepoint.gov.uk/canvey-island-foreshore

