

REPORT BY CLLR IONA PARKER, WARD REPRESENTATIVE AT BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the Parish Council Meeting on 1 July 2025

- **LOCAL PLAN:** The Local Plan sub-committee meetings covering sites in my ward have now taken place. No sites have been allocated in my ward. In many cases this is because the size of the sites falls below the minimum threshold of 10 dwellings. If the parish would like to provide additional housing in the parish the appropriate route would be to produce a neighbourhood plan extending the development boundary of the village. Developers can also seek planning permission through the rural exception sites policy. This policy is designed to provide affordable housing in villages and developers can now include some market housing to make a scheme viable. However they will need to find a Registered Provider of affordable homes to take over the affordable homes and the providers currently operating in the District seem reluctant to take on housing outside the main towns.
- **COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME** - I have £1000 left in my CCGS pot to grant to community projects in my ward. Please get in touch if you are looking for funding for any small projects.
- **RURAL PROSPERITY SCHEME** - BDC has received further funding from the government under this scheme. Please look out for any emails from BDC on this as there may be opportunities for funding for village halls and other community facilities.
- Also, next Friday 4th July at 10.45 at Ashen Village Hall I am meeting a representative of a new project called a SOCIAL SUPERMARKET. This project aims to support residents in rural areas struggling with the cost of living. The supermarket operates by providing low cost food and household items in a village hall once every few weeks for a couple of hours, together with refreshments. Residents are also able to seek advice on council and other matters.
- My ward is one of the 4 wards in Braintree District chosen for the project and I think Ashen would be the most suitable place to host. I would however like to make sure residents in other nearby villages can take advantage of the project and wonder if there is anyone from the Belchamps PC who would like to come along on Friday and meet the social supermarket representative.