

Birdbrook Parish News

From the Chair of your Parish Council

Another year is in its final stages and for me, I don't know where the time has gone. Not an easy year with all the restrictions we have been subjected to and the worry of Covid19 making 2021 a unique year for us all. Let us hope that life will return to a better normality in the near future.

The Parish Council has continued to function and has now held two meetings "face to face" making everything far more straightforward. We are working hard to replace the playground equipment in Birdbrook, led by Councillors Katie Gentry and Martin Gilbert. I thank them both for their commitment and drive in this project. As a Council we have earmarked funds to replace the swings and are awaiting the outcome of yet another grant application. We seem to be thwarted at every turn when it comes to grant applications. The Trustees of the Community House have offered to help and we looking to work more closely with them in the coming months. The table top sale organised mainly by Katie was a major success and she should be delighted with the response from the community. Well done to those who assisted in raising further funds for the playground and a big thank you to those who have already donated.

Have you spotted the new lights in the bus stops in Birdbrook and Baythorne End? Katie informed us that the bus stops were very dark places now that the days have drawn in. For very little money Councillors Martin Gilbert and Steve Rhenius took the initiative and installed some lights powered by solar panels.

It was very disappointing to hear from District Councillor Diana Garrod that the Covid19 rates in our region have increased significantly to such an extent that hospital visiting has been put on hold except for end of life patients. Depressing, but serves as a warning to us all to keep our distance, wear masks where appropriate, and for the best opportunity to fight the disease get the vaccination.

As Headmaster of a school in South London I led many assemblies but for me the most important in our annual calendar was the Remembrance Service. The Royal British Legion sent through facts and stories relating to the world wars and other conflicts. The statistic that struck



Christmas Table Sale

Christmas Craft Fair
Sunday 12 December 11am-4pm
to raise funds for the village play area



me as staggering and one in which I emphasised each year was the loss of life on both sides in the Great War; if memory serves me well it worked out to be just under five thousand people who perished each day and every day for five long years. This figure seemed to resonate with pupils when put in the context that it was equivalent to all the pupils in the school five times over lost their life each day for five years. To remember those who defended our freedoms and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice the Parish Council make a donation each year to the Royal British Legion and we lay a wreath at the War Memorial at St Augustine's Church. It was a privilege and an honour to undertake this role again this year at the Annual Service of Remembrance.

Wishing each and everyone of you a wonderful Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2022.

Peter Smart, Chair, Birdbrook Parish Council

St Augustine's Church Birdbrook

Read all about it!

If there had been a daily newspaper at the time of Jesus', birth I wonder how it might have reported the events? A screaming headline on the front page of the Bethlehem Gazette: "Baby Boy Born in Bovine Booth". Or perhaps in the Herod Herald: "Imposter King - It's a right royal mix up". How about a feature article in the full colour 'Halo' glossy magazine: "Mary and Joseph share their joy as they show us round the one room maternity suite and introduce us to their beautiful son". Maybe it wouldn't have deserved a mention at all.

I'm not sure that the nativity story would have had a huge an impact in Bethlehem at the time - not enough to warrant much more than passing comment anyway. An unremarkable young woman has a baby. Some shepherds suffer from a group hallucination. A group of wealthy tourists get lost on the streets of a backwater town.



Christmas Services at Birdbrook

Sunday 19 December 6.30pm
Lessons and Carols

Saturday 25th December 10.30am
Christmas Communion

Sunday 26 December
No services, on line worship only

Nothing to see here. The Roman census would be a much more pressing concern.

So often everyday life gets in the way of seeing something extraordinary.

In the headlong rush towards Christmas, with all the hubbub of the shopping for presents, the excitement of decorating the Christmas tree, the preparation of the turkey dinner, and the festive visits from family and friends, what do we miss?

Advent, the weeks leading up to Christmas, is a time that has been marked by Christians for at least 1500 years. It's about preparation. Not of gifts or food or decoration, but of ourselves. It's also about expectant waiting. We look for the coming of Christ - eyes and hearts open. And when we do that, there's so much more we will see and hear. The smile on the face of a child. The tears of those who mourn. The cry of the hungry. The laughter of the joyful.

With our vision clearer and all our senses keener, the headline for this and every Christmas comes into focus: "Jesus Christ - Gift from God".

Have a happy, blessed and safe Christmas
Jonathan.

Revd Canon Jonathan Lowe
01440 731687 vicar@2rivers.faith
The Vicarage, 3 Church Street, Steeple Bumpstead,

Details of the forthcoming services during December and January can be found at <https://www.stmaryschurch.org.uk/servicepatterns>

Please be assured that our on-line worship will continue.

The on-line services are aimed at the whole family and are also available afterwards so you can watch in your own time. Simply type the following links into your browser:

Facebook: <http://tiny.cc/7y6zlj>

YouTube: <http://tiny.cc/nx6zlj>

Please do regularly check the Two Rivers Facebook page or contact the Churchwarden, Judi Price, 01440 730506 for the latest information.



Birdbrook Wild Life Column

It's been a funny old Autumn; after a fairly average summer, autumn has been very mild and quite dry. It certainly seems to have confused some of our migratory birds; there was a report of swallows still heading south in Suffolk last week and the Redwings and Fieldfares must think it's still summer having piled into the UK a few weeks ago to escape the wintry weather in Northern Europe, There were reports of flocks of several thousand Redwings in Essex and also large numbers of Fieldfare throughout East Anglia. It's quite unusual to see so many of these migratory thrushes in early winter. Their numbers tend to build up after Christmas but there is quite a large flock of Redwing around the village at the moment and Fieldfare have also been seen locally in good numbers. On the east coast there have been large flocks of Snow buntings which tend to only show up in when the weather gets really grim and I just wonder whether this is a sign of a forthcoming bad winter.

There seems little doubt that our resident birds did not enjoy a successful breeding season and by now I should be ringing quite a few Blackbirds, Robins and Dunnocks but unfortunately they just don't seem to be present in their usual numbers. There does however seem to be good news for one of our resident garden birds. Many of you will have read about the huge decline in the numbers of Greenfinches. This has been mainly due to an outbreak of trichomonosis, a parasite-induced disease which prevents the birds from feeding properly. As with a lot of our common birds, loss of habitat, especially hedgerows and use of insecticides



on farmland and in gardens also has had a huge effect on numbers!! Well, the good news is that this year they seem to have made a stunning recovery, at least locally. I usually ring between 10 and 20 Greenfinches in a year but this year numbers have soared. I ringed 40 birds in September and over a 20 in October and quite amazingly they were all young birds. Pete Connolly at the bottom of Station Road had a flock in early October in excess of 60 birds. He also had a Brambling in his garden! A close relative of the Chaffinch these winter visitors rarely venture into gardens except in the hardest winters.....another sign of what's to come perhaps??

And whilst on the subject of winter visitors I thought you may be interested to see a real rarity that has turned up in Essex in the last few weeks. In amongst the Brent geese flocks on the Crouch Estuary are two Red-breasted geese that normally migrate in the winter to eastern Europe from their breeding grounds in Siberia. Many thanks to Ian Tarbin for the photograph.

And now for a bit of fun. How about keeping a list of the bird species that you see in and around your garden. You'll be surprised just how many you actually see and I've seen over 70 species in the 6 years that I've lived here. Why not get the children involved....it might even get them away from their X-Box's for a while! Oh, and a Happy Xmas to everyone – and opposite is a photo of a Robin ringed earlier this year.

Barry Williams has always been a keen bird watcher. One of his school pals' uncles was a bird ringer. Barry went along one morning to watch him ring and that was it!!! Hooked for life!!! Upon retirement, attracted by the local countryside, and the pub within walking distance, Barry moved to the village from Roydon near

Harlow in late 2015. He will be pleased to answer any readers questions about local birds, you can contact him by emailing: baz_williams@hotmail.com.

Left: Two Red-breasted geese amongst the Brent geese flocks on the Crouch Estuary
Photo by Ian Tarbin

Far left: Robin ringed by Barry earlier this year.

Debbie Hilliard Clerk to the Parish Council

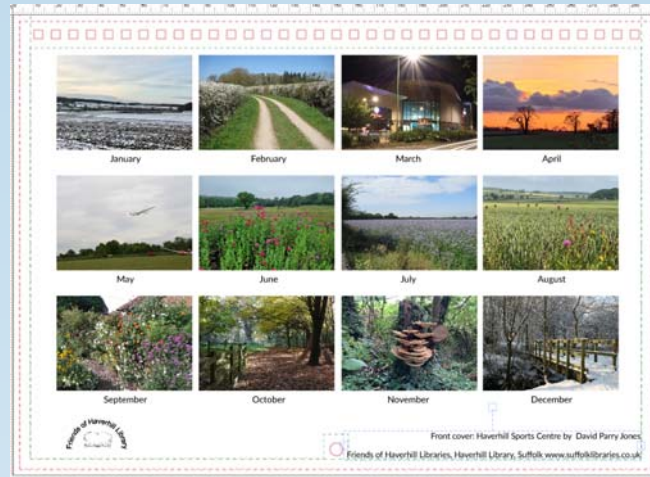


Hello everyone - I am the Clerk to Birdbrook Parish Council, a role I have been in for about 10 years now. I am also Parish Clerk for Stambourne and a Governance Clerk for various school governing bodies in Essex all of which

keeps me busy. I live in Stambourne with my husband and have 3 adult children. I enjoy walking our dogs in the local area and have horses which my daughters and I ride.

I became a Parish Clerk mostly by accident when a friend mentioned that they did it and it might suit me as well. I particularly enjoy working with different groups of people. Apart from meetings I act as a link between the parish and district and county councils and ensure the parish council works in compliance with the rules of governance.

Friends of Haverhill Library Calendar Competition 2022 and 2023



The photographic competition was a great success with superb entries from around the region. You can see the impressive quality 2022 calendar in Haverhill library. The staff are taking orders for a further print run at the very reasonable £7 per copy.

We are running the competition again for 2023 so do carry on taking seasonal photos around Haverhill to enter for next year's calendar competition.

Birdbrook Bowls Club (BBC)

Well hello from the green!

We are fortunate in Birdbrook to have a beautifully maintained bowling green, not obvious from the road, but tucked behind the community house. Go along & take look at the magnificent playing surface, a reflection of all the hard work lavished on it by Leigh Carter and the green team.

Although our lives have been changed in many ways over the last eighteen months or so since my last report, this year more than ever our club members have bowled their hearts out. A big thank you & well done to all our bowlers who bowled in one of our worst seasons for rain.

We currently have sixteen playing members. I am delighted to report that this year we welcomed three new members into the club, Darren Wrenn, Chis & Steve Withers.

You may remember me telling you that the club bowls in two leagues: The North Essex Bowls Federation (NEBF) & the Steeple Bumpstead Bowls League (SBBL).

While the NEBF decided that due to restrictions there would be no promotions or relegations during the 2021 season, the SBBL decided to carry on regardless.

Our first match of the season was against Haverhill played on the 10th May, I am delighted to report that we won, good omens for the rest of the season.

I am delighted to report that BBC are still in the second division in both leagues, a great achievement with so few dedicated members.

On the 26th July we hosted twenty clubs who were celebrating the 75th anniversary of the SBBL. A great days bowling was had by all with the final being cancelled only due to a thunder storm. However the Hog roast was a great success & greatly enjoyed by all.



Two loyal bowlers studying the opposition at a Presidents Day



We are down twelve members since the green closed in August 2019. One of these, Paul Pearce, a member of the club for over 15 years, sadly passed away in March 2021. Yvonne Lawrence, our club captain and president of SBBL, greatly appreciated the support & dedication shown by all club members & wishes to pass on her thanks & gratitude. We wanted to celebrate Paul's life & support for BBC in some way. So the Paul Pearce Memorial Trophy was born. All club members past & present held a pairs competition on the 10 August, a round robin event of five ends each match, which was won by Paul's dear friend Andrew Searle partnered by Gordon Adams.

I am pleased to say that following that successful evening this event will be held annually. Unfortunately the evening Bar-B-Q was not quite so successful due to equipment failure, but thanks must go to Alison & Diane who saved the day by cooking the burgers & sausages.

A great event to bring to a close the 2021 season.

We invite potential new members of all ages to come and give it a try, men, women, accompanied children, everyone is welcome. So do come along to our open day next spring, (date will be advertised in the BPN) relax at the bar with a burger, and give it a go. It will be good to see you and a guaranteed warm welcome awaits you.

Meanwhile, I wish you all a very safe & warm Christmas & safe, healthy 2022.

See you on the green.
Alan Cook, Bowls Club Treasurer

Haverhill Recycling Centre

Open six days a week, closed Wednesdays. You do not have to be a Suffolk resident, but will only be able to take waste to Suffolk Recycling Centres if you have booked a slot.

www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/where-to-recycle/recycling-centres



ENGLISH SPIRIT

MASTER DISTILLERS

DISTILLERY SHOP AT GREAT YELDHAM HALL

Visit our distillery shop at Great Yeldham Hall, the home of English Spirit: Britain's original rum distillers. Here you can sample and shop our range of remarkable spirits, from the original English rum to divine gins, mouth-watering vodkas, experimental single malts, luscious liqueurs, and limited edition varieties, which aren't available for purchase anywhere else!

You can also book a Distillery Tour & Tasting, where you'll be shown around the workings of our small batch distillery, followed by a guided tasting of our spirits.

Available to book via our website or by phone.



SHOP OPENING TIMES

MONDAY - FRIDAY 9AM - 5PM

SATURDAY 10AM - 4PM

SUNDAY & BANK HOLIDAYS - CLOSED



Mention this magazine for a locals 10% discount on distillery tours and in the shop!

GREAT YELDHAM HALL, CHURCH ROAD, GREAT YELDHAM, ESSEX, CO9 4PT
WWW.ENGLISHSPIRIT.UK | 01787 237896

Introducing a local business

PJH Designs

Hello all, we are a small family run decorative metalwork business based in Sible Hedingham. Our business started life from our former family home in Castle Hedingham around 25 years ago, before moving to our current workshop half a mile down the road. Although our workshop is based in Hedingham, all the members of our small team now live in beautiful Birdbrook.

We have a wide range of metal items from garden furniture such as benches and tables, to small decorative items for the home. We also have a number of products which are perfect for wedding reception use, such as our angel wings bottle decoration. All of our products are crafted by hand by our small team. Due to the hand crafted process, no product is ever exactly the same making each item truly unique.



Our range of decorative animals remain a firm favourite, these include our standing stags, wall mounted bees, boxing hares & our cocker spaniel. You may have spotted the stag & bee as raffle prizes for



Birdbrook's recent table top sale. All of these products & more can be found on our website www.pjhgardenfurniture.com

Along with the above, we also offer a bespoke service to bring our customers ideas to life. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or requests.

Best wishes,
The Team at PJH Designs



any way. There were a wide variety of sellers from the local area, as well as games, a raffle and refreshments. It was a great opportunity to meet more of our parishioners and hear your opinions on the designs for the new playground equipment.

The total raised with this event was

! £625 !

All of which has gone straight into the playground refurbishment funds.

We would like to give a special thank you to The Birdbrook Plough who not only donated our top raffle prize but also joined us to help call the raffle! Lovely to see you both. When thinking about your Christmas celebrations remember to take a look at their delicious festive menu!

This is a big project requiring lots of funds so not the end of our fund-raising and we hope you will be as excited as us for the next event, our Christmas Table Sale, Sun 12th December.



Hello From Your District Councillor

Community Transport

Some patients of the Steeple Bumpstead GP surgery have had difficulty accessing their healthcare provider in Haverhill. I would like to confirm that Braintree District Council will provide transport to Haverhill for healthcare reasons, e.g. visit to the GP surgery or to collect prescriptions or medicine. This is currently only organised via telephone. There is a cost involved and full details can be found at: www.braintree.gov.uk/community/social-car-scheme or telephone: 01376 557883.

Unfortunately there are few volunteers in this part of the district and BDC would love to hear from anyone who would be interested in joining their Social Car Scheme. Please contact either myself or the BDC team on 01376 557883 for more information.

Isolated Bird Flu Case

An isolated outbreak of Avian Influenza (or Bird Flu) has been confirmed at an animal sanctuary in Kirby Cross in Tendring. The outbreak is in birds and there are no cases in people. Avian Influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. Pet owners with other animals do not usually need to take other action. If a person has concerns regarding their pet, they should contact their private veterinary surgeon.

The Food Standards Agency has said that Avian Influenza poses a very low food safety risk for consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

New Legislation - Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021

Botulinum toxin and cosmetic fillers for under 18s - New legislation: It is a criminal offence to administer botulinum toxin (commonly known as 'Botox') or a filler by way of injection for a cosmetic purpose to a person under 18, even if they have the permission of someone over 18. More information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/botulinum-toxin-and-cosmetic-fillers-for-under-18s

Cycle Storage Grant

We are offering capital grants to businesses on our industrial estates willing to install on-site cycle storage facilities. Grants of **up to £2,000** are available to support 30 small or medium sized businesses. BDC's cycling strategy aims to increase the number of short journeys that people make by bike, in an effort to reduce emissions and congestion, tackle climate



change and ease the pressure on car parking. We know that good facilities to store bikes is a really important factor in people's decision to cycle to work. Businesses can visit www.braintree.gov.uk/cyclestorage to find out more about the scheme, criteria and application

process. The scheme is open to applications until **6 December 2021**.

Essex Business Adaptation Grant to re-open soon

A scheme designed to help businesses adapt their operations or premises in response to Covid-19 is coming soon. Small and medium sized businesses will be able to apply for a grant of up to £5,000 to make their businesses Covid-19 secure. Keep an eye out for the updates on the BDC website or social media.

Temporary Suspension of Visiting in Local Hospitals

Visiting is temporarily suspended in Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge, east and west Suffolk hospitals and north east Essex hospitals. This is due to the high number of COVID-19 infections in the community. However, there are some exceptions and visiting will still be supported for:

- End-of-life care
- Those in formal caring roles for patients with learning disabilities or severe dementia, for example
- Parents of children
- Maternity

There will be no changes in the above areas. Volunteers will be unable to visit general wards, but can continue to offer their support in end-of-life care and maternity (please enquire at the relevant hospital). The situation will be reviewed in December in line with hospital admissions and overall community prevalence, and to decide whether to continue with the suspension or return to a restricted visiting policy.

And Finally ...

Christmas is a time for family and friends, and I would like to wish all residents a happy Christmas break. I know everyone is eager to get back to normal, but please spare a thought for the vulnerable; keep them safe and take a Lateral Flow Test before you visit.

With best wishes to all,

Cllr. Diana Garrod
District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward

Clare Park Tuesday Walks

Clare Walkers introduced their short walk programme in July 2018 as part of the OneLife Health Walks scheme. This scheme runs throughout Suffolk and offers a range of walks for people of all ages and abilities, providing people with a variety of choices from countryside to more urban walks. Many people join to improve their health, well-being and meet new friends. All the Health Walks are free. The walks last just over an hour and are classed as "easy". Any queries please email info@clarewalks.co.uk

Interested in joining us? We meet each Tuesday at 10.15 for a 10.30 start, near the Goods Shed Clare Castle Country Park.

clarewalks.co.uk/tuesday-health-walks

Stambourne Chapel Care

Matthew 25:40 (CEV) The king will answer, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me."

We are now supporting about 30 people with various needs. These include befriending, gardening, dog walking, shopping, prescription collection, transport, support with medical appointments as well as advice on other support available.

As part of interfaith week (14th- 18th November) Braintree District Council put together a film about services that are available and we featured in one of the films (Braintree District Council Facebook page).

On a Wednesday we continue with our club for those with additional needs with activities such as gardening, card making, recycling and vacuuming the Chapel.

We are looking at starting a weekly lunch group but need to do some work on the kitchen before we are able to do this. So if you have any or know anyone with skills such as kitchen fitting, flooring, painting, plumbing etc please get in touch.

Do you have any fundraising ideas for the kitchen or for the work of Stambourne Chapel Care? We rely on grants and donations to fund our work.

Stambourne Chapel Care needs more volunteers so if you are able to spare a few hours a week/ month please get in contact.

We need befrienders and people to tidy gardens ready for the winter with strimming, weeding and cutting back.

Please contact Jill on 07883423528 or holmesjill30@gmail.com

Ever heard of bacteriophages? Or phage therapy?

A phage, or bacteriophage, is a natural, microscopic predator that attacks and kills bacteria. There are more phages on Earth than every other organism combined! Phages exist naturally all over the planet and can be found in water, soil or on animals.

Phages can kill bacteria that have become immune to antibiotics. They are clinically safe and highly specific, so they don't harm the good bacteria. By taking samples from a wide range of environments, scientists can isolate new phages that can be used to treat antibiotic-resistant infections.

You can help by becoming a **Phage Hunter**. Visit www.citizenphage.com to find out more.

Who knows, our village pond (pictured below) could yet change the world.



Christmas Craft Fayre
Colne Valley Arms,
New England, CO9 4BD
(Just outside Sturmer)

10am - 2pm on 11th December

Cards, locally made crafts and gifts, tea, coffee and refreshments and lots more...Please come along and support this local event!
We'd all love to see you!
Organiser - Coral Fordham 0787 655 3332

****MONTHLY CRAFT FAYRE****
****TO FOLLOW AT THIS VENUE****
****WATCH THIS SPACE!****

Bus Shelter Lights

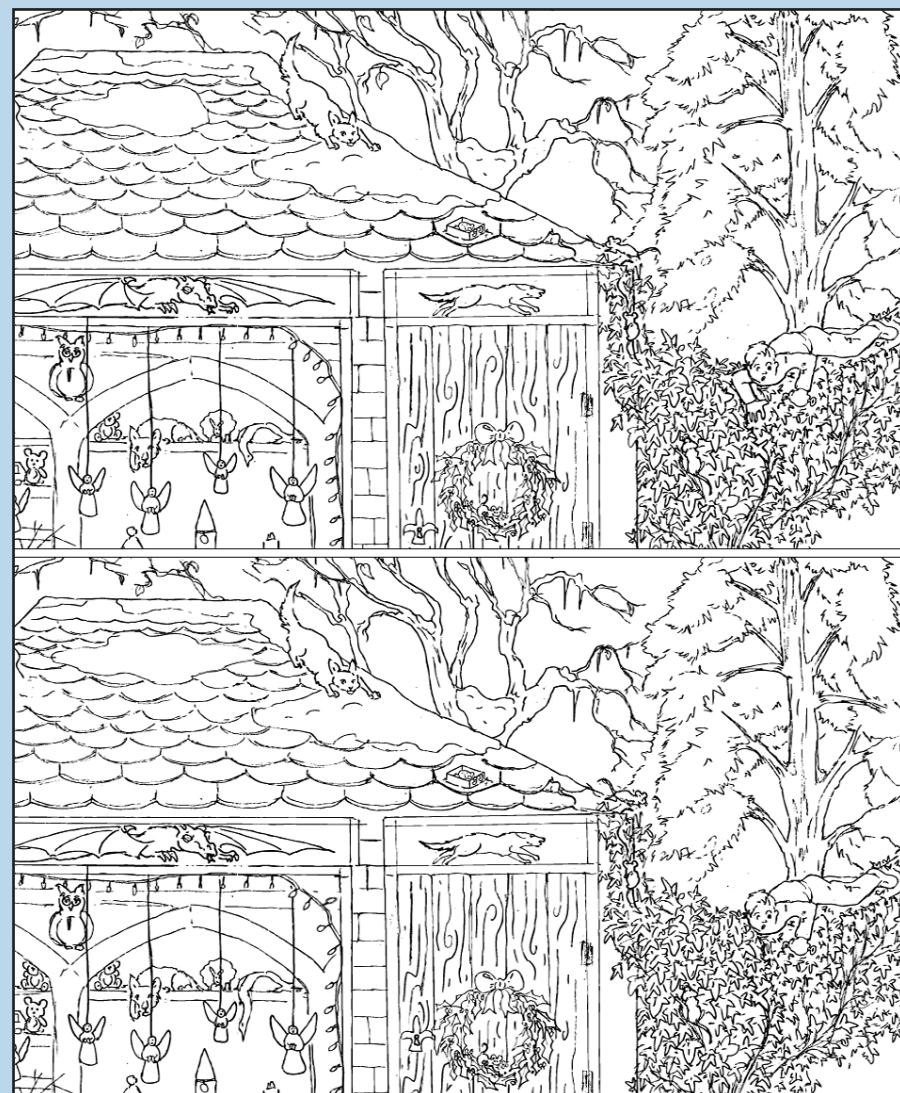
In response to observation that bus stops were very dark places now that the days have drawn in, Councillors Martin Gilbert and Steve Rhenius installed some lights powered by solar panels in the bus shelters in Birdbrook & Baythorne End.



Bus shelter at Baythorne End showing inside light (left) and solar panel (right)

Christmas Spot the Difference

Can You Spot 12 Differences between these two pictures?



Mobile Library

Essex Mobile Library will be coming to Birdbrook on the following Thursdays:
2nd December 2021
23rd December 2021
13th January 2022
3rd February 2022
24th February 2022

On all of these dates the Library will be parked outside the Church in Birdbrook between 2.55pm-3.25pm

What is ??? A Bitly Web Address???

Bitly is a company offering a URL shortening service. They offer a free basic service, and paid premium packages. The company uses HTTP 301 redirects for its links. The shortcuts are intended to be permanent and cannot be changed once they are created.

Long web addresses are a nuisance to type in accurately. When we give long addresses in this newsletter, you can copy and paste from the online edition which we publish on the Birdbrook Parish Council website: www.birdbrook.org.uk/bbnews.html

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch 28 to 30 January 2022

Big Garden Birdwatch 2021 was the biggest ever, with over one million people taking part and sharing in the excitement.

It's fun, free, and for everyone!

Pick a time You can choose any hour between 28 and 30 January 2022. So whether you're an early bird or a night owl, you can still take part.

Record what you see Count the birds you see in your garden. Ignore any birds that are still in flight. To avoid double-counting, just record the highest number of each bird species you see at any one time – not a running total.

Submit your results

Online: You can submit your results online at rspb.org.uk/birdwatch

By post: If you'd rather send your results by post, you can download a submission form below.

Every count is important so, if you don't see anything, please still submit your result. Finding out which birds don't visit your area is as important as understanding those which do!

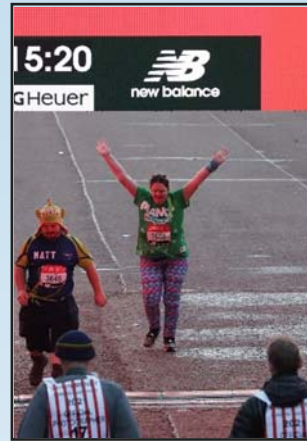
www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch

Mandy's Marathon

Yeah! I did it! On the 3rd October 2021 I ran the Virgin London Marathon! And Wow! What an incredible experience!

It was an epic day; the crowds were phenomenal, and the atmosphere was brilliant.

In 2017, I lost my Mum to cancer and needed a framework to support me through and so I created my Bucket List. Running the London Marathon was on it – but as one of those HUGE goals and a BIG dream and as a non-runner it was million miles from



where I actually was fitness wise. The training was intense, lots of fun with many silly moments on the way. I tried out lots of different locations to run to keep things interesting.

Coming across that finishing line was something very, very special.



Defibrillator Awareness

Martin Fagan's 24 minute awareness talk: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZ33U2GfEB0

NARS Film: www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4V-KYmtmFk

Lifeline View Film: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKGsCWKDS6g

To book a Zoom session please the link: form.jotformeu.com/comheartbeat/awareness-booking-form

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR
12TH DECEMBER 2021
11AM-4PM

BIRDBROOK COMMUNITY HOUSE
CO9 4BN

Fundraising to replace and refurbish the play area

Local crafts, Christmas gifts, festive refreshment, games and you may even spot an elf!
Book your table now! £10
Email: katie_owner@hotmail.com or call 07496 763573