

# Birdbrook Parish News



## Birdbrook Community House

**Coffee Mornings**  
**Fridays 10 am-12 noon**  
**All welcome**  
\*  
**Volunteers needed!**

The Community House Management Committee are looking for more members to support the continuous running of Birdbrook Community House. Would you be able to give a few hours, or even an hour once a week/month? We need help popping in to check after hires, to event volunteers, to setting out tables and chairs for a hire, as well as organising fundraising events and keeping on top of stock within Community House. Read more on p6.

If you could volunteer any amount of time  
please email Katie, Vice Chair:  
[katie\\_owner@hotmail.com](mailto:katie_owner@hotmail.com)

Birdbrook Community House  
The social heart of the parish

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The social heart of the parish

JOIN US FOR OUR  
ANNUAL  
**CHRISTMAS  
FAIR &  
GROTTO**

**FREE GROTTO FOR ALL CHILDREN  
6TH DECEMBER, 2025  
11AM UNTIL 3PM**

**BIRDBROOK COMMUNITY HOUSE CO9 4BN**  
TRADING TABLE £10 IN ADVANCED £15 ON THE DAY  
(SPACE PERMITTING) EMAIL TO BOOK  
[BIRDBROOKEVENTS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BIRDBROOKEVENTS@GMAIL.COM)

**December 2025**



## Hello from your District Councillor



### Scheduled Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders & Roadworks

Works at New England, Sturmer Road. Ongoing for Utility Asset Works. Anglian Water. Project: SEW-12079 - Stambourne Pump Away Scheme. Installing underground storm water storage pipes. **E: [onealliancecustomers@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:onealliancecustomers@anglianwater.co.uk)** T: 03457 145 145.

Intended closure of Egg Shell Lane, Steeple Bumpstead on 19th November 2025 for one day for meter exchange works on Finchingfield Road are undertaken by Anglian Water. **<https://one.network/?tm=GB145197277>**

Intended closure of Four Ash Hill, Ridgewell Road, Baythorne End, Baythorne Park, Birdbrook, due to commence on 24th November 2025 for 3 days while Essex County Council undertakes carriageway patching. **<https://one.network/?tm=GB145778005>**

### Local Plan Review to 2041 – Changes and Consultation

Braintree District Council must allocate land for where housing could be built of around 1,300 homes a year up to 2041, a mandatory target set by central government. Changes have been made to the BDC Local Plan Review timetable and the Regulation 18 consultation will now be February 2026. This 'Preferred Options' consultation; the first of two statutory consultations, will ask residents for views on the draft Local Plan including the proposed sites before any final decisions are made on sites. This is the opportunity to have your say and help shape the draft Local Plan before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. I have been asked about a 'Green Buffer' between Haverhill and villages in the Bumpstead Ward. If residents and parish councils wish, the consultation in February would be the time to ask BDC for a 'green buffer' to be allocated in BDC's evidence base going forward, as there are currently no plans for this. Once the final plan is adopted, it will allocate land for development up to 2041. This is why it's important for residents, businesses, communities and all interested parties to have their say, engage with the proposed plan and share ideas for shaping your local area and the district's future. I would urge everyone to view the LPSC agenda's to keep abreast of the review going forward:

**<https://braintree.cmis.uk.com/braintree/Committees>**

### Housing target

- Braintree District Council is required to allocate land for where housing could be built of around 1,300 homes a year up to 2041, a target that is mandatory and set by central government.

- Targets are set by looking at population growth, housing affordability and existing housing stock.

- If it does not plan for the new homes needed, the council would not have a sound local plan. This means that applications for development are more likely to be granted at appeal by Inspectors who act for the national government. This would reduce the council's and community's influence over what kind of housing is built and where.

- Over 300 sites have been submitted to the council for consideration, which would be able to provide over 100,000 new homes. Many sites have been discounted at this stage and are not currently planned to go forward into a draft plan.

- Existing site allocations and windfall development will also support to meet the housing target. Windfall development is on land which has not been specifically identified as available in the local plan process - typically these are previously developed sites or infill sites which become unexpectedly available e.g. small sites such as a barn conversion or a new flat over a shop.

### How residents can keep updated:

1. The most up-to-date information on the Local Plan Review and timetable can be found on the council's website at **[www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview)**

2. Register to the council's Local Plan database to get notified first when Local Plan consultations launch: **<https://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/>**

3. Sign up to our planning newsletter to be the first to hear of latest updates relating to planning matters including the Local Plan Review: **<https://pages.news.braintree.gov.uk/p/newsletters>**

### Green Buffer

I would again draw your attention to the Braintree District Settlement Fringe Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2025 (see P50+ agenda 24/09/25) it seems that BDC currently have no plans to ensure a green buffer between the villages in the Bumpstead Ward and Haverhill. I have been asked about

requesting a Green Buffer by PC members; it is during the February 2026 consultation (Reg. 18) that Parish Councils, particularly Sturmer and Helions Bumpstead, and residents, put forward a request to BDC's planning team that a 'green buffer' is put in place by Braintree District Council and that this is included in their evidence base going forward.

### The Current Local Plan Sub-Committee Timetable

6th November 2025 starting at 18:30  
11th December 2025 starting at 19:15  
21st January 2025; 19:15  
5th, 11th, and 26th February 2026; 19:15  
12th and 25th March 2026; 19:15

\*Agendas are published 5 working days latest, before the meeting.

At this point in time, BDC needs to find sites for a further 1,097 homes. The North of the district (Bumpstead Ward) is still under consideration although Homes England have made it clear that the A1307 cannot cope with further traffic to Cambridge.

### A1307 – Recent questions from PC members

PC members have recently asked me questions about assessment of the A1307. These links may assist:-

A draft Concepts Report on the A1307 Cambridge to Haverhill Corridor dated Jan. 2016 discusses congestion. This may be of interest:

**<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Public-Transport/CambridgeSouth-East-Transports/Documents-pre-2020/A1307-Concepts-Report-26-01-2016.pdf>**

The Executive Summary report dated February 2017 may also be of interest:



**<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Public-Transport/CambridgeSouth-East-Transport/Documents-pre-2020/A1307-Preferred-Options-Exec-Summary-17.02.2017.pdf>**

I have found a community group 38 Degrees (which calls the A1307 'The Road of Death') is asking for a formal assessment of the road with a petition:-

**<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/a1307-urgent-one-of-uks-most-dangerous-roads-taken-too-manyprecious-lives>**

### Potential Funding for your Projects

Awards for All, and Reaching Communities – The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)

TNLCF offer funding from £300 to £20,000 and can support your project for up to two years. You can apply for funding to deliver a new or existing activity or to support your organisation to change and adapt to new and future challenges.

They can fund projects that will do at least one of these things:

- bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities
  - improve the places and spaces that matter to communities
  - help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage
  - support people, communities and organisations facing more demands and challenges because of the cost-of-living crisis
- <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes?country=england&status=open>**

### NFU Mutual Charitable Trust grants

The objectives of this Trust focus on the areas of agriculture, rural development and insurance in the UK and in particular:

- Advance the education of the public by means of research and dissemination of information in relation to agriculture

- Advance the education of young people within rural areas

- Relieve poverty within rural areas

- Promote the benefit and social welfare of inhabitants of rural communities by associating together with the inhabitants and local authorities, voluntary and other organisations to advance education and leisure

- Promote research into agriculture associated activities

- Advance the education of the public by means of research and dissemination of information in relation to insurance provided that the charity may also promote, facilitate and support any such other purposes as are exclusively charitable according to the laws of England and WalesThe Trustees meet twice a year to consider applications received. Applications for the June meeting must be submitted by 23rd May 2025 and for the November meeting, by 10th October 2025.

**<https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/about-us/charitable-trust/applications-for-funding/>**

### The Major Housing Grant

BDC make major housing grants for:

- Installing hot water or heating systems
- Repairing hot water or heating systems

Residents can apply for a major housing grant if you are:

- An owner occupier of a property
- A leaseholder with at least five years lease remaining and have a repairing responsibility for the property



• The property you want to repair, must be your only or main residence and must have been in your ownership for at least three years. For first time buyers, you must have owned the property for at least 12 months.

Major housing grants are means-tested and you must repay the grant in full when you sell or transfer the

property. Contact: [phandh@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:phandh@braintree.gov.uk) to apply for a major housing grant.

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/housing/major-housing-grants>

### Local Nature Partnership – Community Fund

The Essex LNP has launched the LNP Community Fund, a new grant scheme supporting local action for nature across Essex. Grants of £500 to £2,000 are available for groups to deliver projects that boost biodiversity, connecting people with nature and access to green spaces. Closes 31/12/2025.

[https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/waste-environment/essex-lnp-community-fund-2025-applicationform/?utm\\_source=e-shot&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=LNRS+Newsletter+Nov+2025](https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/waste-environment/essex-lnp-community-fund-2025-applicationform/?utm_source=e-shot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LNRS+Newsletter+Nov+2025)

### Braintree Local Highways Panel Meetings 2026

Future meetings of Braintree Local Highways Panel are scheduled to take place on the following dates:-

Thursdays at 17:00; 29th January 2026, 19th March 2026, 25th June 2026, 1st October 2026



## Gemma's Footcare

Foot Health Practitioner  
SAC Dip RFHP

- Toe Nail Cutting
- Callus/Corn Removal
- Diabetic Foot Care
- Ingrown Toe Nail Removal
- Fungal Nail Treatment

Telephone/Text: 07498 386648

Email: [gemmafootcare@gmail.com](mailto:gemmafootcare@gmail.com)

Foot Care in the comfort of your own home

Or you can come to my home in Steeple Bumpstead

I look forward to hearing from you soon

*Fact: In an average lifetime we walk around the world 3 times*



### Braintree District Council/Healthwatch Essex – FREE SLIPPERS

Worn-out slippers can present a dangerous health hazard and increase the risk of falls, and safe slippers will ensure that older adults stay safe, warm and steady on their feet this winter. No need to book. Only available for those living in the Braintree District.

Steeple Bumpstead Village Hall CB9 7EA on Wednesday 17th December 10am – 12PM

### Have your say on Future

#### Funding Plans for Policing and Fire and Rescue in Essex

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst is asking county residents for their views on funding plans for Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service. To hear those views in maintaining or improving the current strength and ability of both services, all residents, businesses and people who work or travel in any Essex district are asked to complete the PFCC Precept Survey for the financial year 2026/27. You can complete the short survey here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PFCCSurvey26-27/>

### Essex Highways User Survey - Have Your Say!

This is an annual survey, and the responses we received last year were extremely helpful in identifying what's important to you and ensuring this is reflected in Essex Highways annual plans. Please do take the time again this year to let us know your thoughts and help shape the highways service in Essex. The survey is open until 23rd November 2025. <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/93452a58/>

For further information regarding Essex County Council's highway boundary please click on the following link <https://www.essexhighways.org/highways-information-map> and select the highway record which is in the asset data section on the highways information map.

### HMRC: Making Tax Digital for Income Tax – campaign, webinars and resources hub – The new way to do Tax Returns

It is the biggest change since HMRC launched Self Assessment more than 30 years ago. HMRC has launched a comprehensive communications campaign to raise awareness of Making Tax Digital for Income Tax. It is a new way for sole traders and landlords to report their income and expenses to HMRC and submit their tax returns. From 6 April 2026, sole traders and landlords with qualifying income over £50,000 from self-employment and property will be required to use Making Tax Digital for Income Tax. You will need to use

recognised software, send quarterly updates and submit your tax return by 31<sup>st</sup> January each year. Info at:

<https://makingtaxdigital.campaign.gov.uk>

Software finder tool that works with Making Tax Digital for Income Tax:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-software-that-works-with-making-tax-digital-for-income-tax>

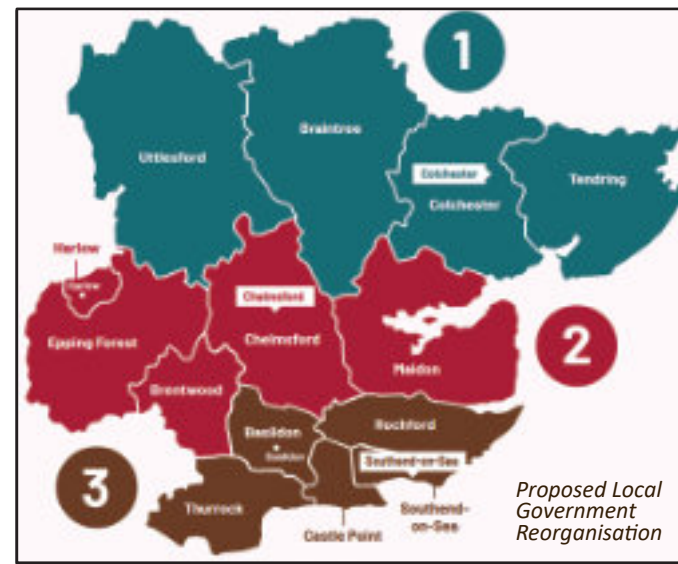
Videos and sign up for Webinars for Making Tax Digital for Income Tax:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-for-making-tax-digital>

### Farmers in the Braintree District given Forensic DNA Marker Kits

Braintree Neighbourhood Policing Team is supporting farmers with these special kits which include a solution containing a unique DNA code and an identity number which, together make marked property easily traceable back to its owner. PCSO Terrie Johnson is writing to Farm Watch members, inviting them to contact her to arrange a visit from an officer to show farmers how to use and register their kits. Alternatively, farmers in the district can book an appointment by email:

[terrie.johnson@essex.police.uk](mailto:terrie.johnson@essex.police.uk)



### Edith Cavell Exhibition – Norwich Cathedral

I am sure many locals will be aware of the marvellous Cavell Community Choir at Steeple Bumpstead. Edith Cavell was a Norfolk Nurse and First World War heroine. She was executed by the Germans in 1915 for helping allied soldiers escape occupied Belgium. This free exhibition is on display in Norwich Cathedral Library 10am-4pm Tuesdays to Thursdays until 23<sup>rd</sup> December. You can see some exhibits and further info. on the website: <https://cathedral.org.uk/events/edith-cavell-exhibition/>

### Applications for Reception School Places

Parents and carers in Essex can now apply for primary (reception) school places. The application window is open between 10 November 2025 and 15 January 2026.

Children are entitled to start primary school in the September after their fourth birthday. Parents and carers of children born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 can apply now.

Applications can be made online at

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

Those received after the 15 January deadline will only be considered once all on time applications are determined. This means applying late could reduce the chance of parents getting a place for their child at their preferred school.

Parents can also consider how they could best prepare their child to start in reception. [www.startingreception.co.uk](http://www.startingreception.co.uk) has a range of resources that may be helpful.

### Do You Need a Food Recycling Bin?

Weekly food recycling is BDC's most frequent kerbside collection.

If you don't have a small green external food recycling caddy, you can ask for one in a short form:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/xfp/form/292>

or email: [csc@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:csc@braintree.gov.uk)

### Local Government Reorganisation Update

Following the Full Council meeting in September, where councillors debated proposals for the unitary authority. The meeting showed a clear preference for the Three Unitary proposal (left) that was developed by Essex County Council and on that basis it was suggested to the Leader of Braintree District Council that this should be the proposal that BDC supports for the final submission to Government. It should be noted that the decision of which proposal, if any, to implement is not a decision of the Council or any council in Greater Essex. The formation of councils is a function of Central Government and the final decision will be made by the Secretary of State. Current provisional indications from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are that the Secretary of State will set out their 'minded-to' decision in spring 2026. It is expected that Government will launch a statutory consultation soon and BDC will be a statutory consultee. Sadly, Government information for our future remains somewhat vague.

*With best wishes to all,*

*Cllr. Diana Garrod*

*Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward*

### Photo front cover: Trumpington Meadows

The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants care for over 100 reserves covering more than 4,000 hectares. These are free to visit, each offering a rare species, a wonderful walk or a great view. <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/> Similarly Essex Wildlife Trust manages over 8,400 acres on 87 nature reserves and run 10 Nature Discovery Centres: <https://www.essexwt.org.uk/>





## Birdbrook Community House

Planning a family celebration, charity fundraiser, club or society meeting?

Whatever your event, the Birdbrook Community House provides an ideal venue. Set in the heart of the village, the Community House offers both large and small meeting rooms together with kitchen and bar facilities. The Main Hall can accommodate up to 50 guests and for smaller, more intimate gatherings of up to 25 there's the Reading Room.

The Birdbrook Community House, completed in 1958, was generously gifted to the people of the parish by the Bryce Foundation, to provide 'buildings, facilities and open space

for amateur sport, economic and community development, and employment for the benefit of the inhabitants of the civil parish of Birdbrook'. A commendable aim and one which today's trustees strive to uphold.

When first opened the Community House employed two full-time staff to look after the building. It is now managed and maintained by a small group of volunteers, which includes the trustees. Throughout its sixty-plus year history the Community House has always played an important role in the social life of the parish. As our slogan says we believe it is 'the social heart of the parish'. However, for it to prosper and remain a focal point for social events and activities for years to come, it needs your support.

This might simply be attending events or joining one of the clubs or groups who meet at the Community House. Alternatively you may wish to become a trustee or volunteer, to help organise social and fundraising events. Whatever help you feel able to give would be most welcome, please contact Katie if you want to learn more about getting involved.

To prosper and provide a legacy for future generations the Community House needs also to remain relevant. It must adapt to the changing needs of the community. The trustees have been working to expand the range of activities held at the

Community House, improve the facilities and to control running costs. One recent initiative was the introduction of an hourly hire rate, whereby rooms can be booked for as little as £12 for an hour, should you need the space for a short business meeting or drop-in event.

Also looking to the future, the trustees have updated the constitution. First and foremost to make it more readable and relatable to a present-day audience, but also to allow changes to the management structure. They hope this will encourage greater participation. The updated constitution document, it is available to view on the Community House website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse/>

The Birdbrook Parish News carries regular features on the activities of groups which use the Community House. Probably the most talked about of these being the Birdbrook Bowls Club, who are to be congratulated on winning promotion to Division 1 of the North Essex County Bowling Federation [NECBF] league this season. If you would like to be part of the winning side for the 2026 season, please contact Alan Cook for more information on membership email: [cook734@btinternet.com](mailto:cook734@btinternet.com)

The Birdbrook Ladies Group, another long-established village society, meet at the Community House on the second Thursday of each month. If you have an interest in such things as the intricacies of grave digging or the art and skill of traditional butchery, you can follow the activities of the Birdbrook Ladies Group through their regular features page in the Parish News. Better still you could go along to their next meeting. To see for yourself what it's all about. We are sure you will be made most welcome. For more information please contact Sue: [s\\_54king@hotmail.com](mailto:s_54king@hotmail.com)

# Planning a function or celebration?



## Birdbrook Community House

The social heart of the parish

### Large Hall or Smaller Meeting Room for Hire

- Wedding receptions
- Birthday Parties
- Business meetings

- Regular Groups
- Exercise Classes
- Youth Groups

★ Available 365 days a year
★ Fully equipped kitchen




Email [katie\\_owner@hotmail.com](mailto:katie_owner@hotmail.com) or [matt@unwinestates.co.uk](mailto:matt@unwinestates.co.uk)

[www.e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse](http://www.e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse)

Other groups which meet regularly at the Community House include: Head to toe Holistic - Pilates and Relaxation; the Karenja Meditation Group and the Birdbrook Community Hub. For information on the times, charges and contact details, please visit our website.

The next big event at the Community House is the annual Christmas Fair and Grotto on the 6th December, from 11:00 to 3:00. As well as an opportunity to snap up a few last minute Christmas gifts, for all the kids out there, both old and young, there may be a chance to meet a very special visitor. Don't miss out. Ho! Ho! Ho!

Whatever your event or activity, we believe the ideal place to host it is the Birdbrook Community House.

For more information on the facilities and hire rates or to check the calendar of upcoming events visit our website. You can also pick up a brochure by calling at the Community House. If you wish to make a booking or would like to have a look over the facilities contact Katie: [katie\\_owner@hotmail.com](mailto:katie_owner@hotmail.com). Community House website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse>

## Haverhill and District u3a

The u3a is a unique organisation offering people the opportunity to continue to pursue and share hobbies and activities with others, but also the option to discover and learn something totally new. It is open to those who are retired, semi-retired or no longer in full time employment. It is also a way of meeting and making new friends in a relaxing and friendly manner.

The Haverhill and District u3a is an enthusiastic group that embodies the ethos of Learn, Laugh and Live by its wide range of interest and activity groups.

There is a programme of open meetings, held in the main hall of the Haverhill Arts centre on the last Tuesday of each month at 10am for 10.30am with the opportunity to hear interesting speakers and enjoy socialising afterwards. .

The talk on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November was 'The Living Memorial' at Whitehouse Farm, Rettendon.

With a services background, ad inspired by events at Wootton Bassett in 2008, Fran and Peter Theobald decided to devote first 8n 8, then a 20 acre field on their farm to a memorial to those who have lost their lives in service to the country. They have included every war up to WW11. Many services are represented, and groups are being added continuously. Fundraising has been a great challenge, but support has been amazing. You can find out more following them on Facebook or at: <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/195064>

If you wish to visit, they recommend spring and summertime, rather than winter.

The next talk will be Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January: 'The Tutu Man's Other Show by Iestyn Edwards.

## From Birdbrook Parish Council

**Next Meeting Date**  
**7pm in Birdbrook Community House**  
**6<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**The Local Plan**  
Local plans are a government requirement produced by District Councils following local consultation.  
For more info see the District Councillor's in this issue.

**Concerns?**  
If Parishioners have comments or concerns they should address them to appointed Cllr's or to Debbie, our Parish Clerk. Alternatively you have the opportunity to address the Cllr's at their meetings (dates above) which are open to the public.

**Cllr Steve Rhenius: [chair@birdbrook.org.uk](mailto:chair@birdbrook.org.uk)**  
**Debbie, Parish Clerk: [parishclerk@birdbrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@birdbrook.org.uk)**


**The Birdbrook Parish News** welcomes pieces on general topics of interest to readers: please send to **Val / Katie: [birdbrook2021@gmail.com](mailto:birdbrook2021@gmail.com)**

Haverhill and District u3a has over 50 interest groups on a huge variety of topics, that meet on a regular basis. Members (membership is £10 per year) are given a prospectus of all the groups, their meetings, and organiser contact details, and receive a regular newsletter detailing activities and reporting on group outings.



To find out more visit:  
<https://www.haverhillu3a.com>

THE BIRDBROOK PLOUGH

# MARLEY'S PIE & MASH VAN



**Joining us at the Plough!**  
19<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
Serving 5pm - 7:30pm

**The St., Birdbrook, Halstead CO9 4BJ**



An Extraordinary Act of Kindness

On 9th November, Remembrance Sunday, my cousin Wendy from Scotland & her husband Howard were staying with Diane & myself so that Howard, a Falklands & Iraq veteran, could parade at the Cenotaph in London. I was taking him to Epping to catch a Central Line train: what follows are in his words. Alan Cook

Wendy & I are staying with her cousin Alan & his wife Diane, primarily so that I could attend the Cenotaph in London. Sunday morning, up bright & early, Alan & I headed off to Epping to catch the tube.

Alan is driving, about fifteen minutes out in thick fog, BANG we hit a pothole. The tyre starts to deflate, we limp into Cornish Hall End, Alan is devastated. We came to a stop just off a driveway, opposite was a van written on its side Angel 24hour Mobile Tyres.



The Cenotaph, Whitehall

I said to Alan “what are the chances of that. A mobile try specialist called ANGELS”. Alan had activated his in car roadside assistance who were extremely helpful but said their operative would be with us between 8 - 9am. Alan had left his mobile at home so I was relaying messages on mine. We were sitting in the car, time now 7.30am. The chap who runs Angels came out of his house, incidentally on his way to a memorial service.

Alan went across to have a word & see if he could help, his name was Grant. “What’s up mate?” Alan explained so he inspected the damage but unfortunately he didn’t have a replacement tyre of the correct size on board.

At this point Grants partner Steph came out of the house & asked what the problem was. Alan explained & pointed to me, by this time I was out of the car. Steph saw me in my blazer, medals, beret & Falklands scarf. “Take my car, he needs to get to the Cenotaph” she said.

We were absolutely flabbergasted & speechless, that someone could just turn round to two complete strangers at that time on a Sunday morning & hand over their car keys.

A Range Rover no less, we just looked at one another in total disbelief. I quickly said, “Alan you’re driving”.

We left Alans car keys with Steph a we headed off to Epping. It was still very foggy so progress was slow. I kept telling Alan that there was nothing more we could do. If I don’t get there, I don’t get there, it’s okay. I could see that he was feeling bad about things, but it wasn’t his fault.

We arrived at Epping & I handed Alan some money in order to show my grateful appreciation & thanks to Grant & Steph, such amazing people. I got to HorseGuards just in time.

This is the country we live in & don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.

An amazing couple who I can’t thank enough for making sure that I got there chance to meet up with my shipmates & pay our respects to the fallen.

Grant as it turned out is an ex paratrooper who originated from South Africa. He is associated with a motorbike club who support disabled veteran’s & run a food service in Stevenage. The name of his business says it all & is so appreciate ANGEL. They were both certainly our Angels that morning. Howard Lazenby.

Support your Local Farmers with Your Kitchen Waste

There seem to have been lots of complaints locally about the fertilizer which has been spread on local farms, also mis-information on social media. Perhaps I could clarify what has been used.

Known as Digestate it is a by product of anaerobic digestion of which there are several plants around the country which use the process to create electricity to sell to the grid. Some of these AD plants are based on farms where they are fed with crops such as maize or rye. Larger ones are fed with food waste from households & restaurants.

Each week we all put out our small green bins full of waste to be collected, mostly with no further thought as to what happens to it!

Instead of ending up in landfill it is sent to an AD plant in Dagenham, the process breaks down the waste which produces biogas which is burned to produce electricity, the leftover material is the digestate which is a liquid rich in nutrients such as nitrogen, potassium & phosphorus. It is then transported to local farms to be spread as organic fertilizer which is much better for the environment than fertilizer produced from fossil fuels & often sourced from abroad. It produces amazing crops & improves the soil for years to come.

There have been complaints about the odour & yes it does smell for a day or two after application but surely if you choose to live in & take advantage of our beautiful countryside you have to accept and support farming practices, especially recycling our green bin contents.

Judi Price, Rylands Farm, Steeple Bumpstead

St Augustine, Birdbrook

Sunday 14th Dec:  
6pm Lessons and Carols with mulled wine and sausage rolls

Thursday 25th Sept:  
Christmas Day 10.30am Holy Communion

Services usually 2nd & 4th Sundays:

Sunday 11th January: 10:30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 25th January: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion

Everyone welcome!

Church Warden: Judi Price 01440 730506



Birdbrook Bowls Club

Well here we are at the end of the 2025 season & nearing the Yuletide festivities

In April we once again held our Open Afternoon where we hoped that we would attract new members to the club & introduce them to the ancient game of lawn bowls.

We were extremely pleased to welcome several new members who achieved great results by the end of the season, more of that later.

However we lost some members also, we wish them well in their new clubs.

BIRDBROOK is an extremely friendly club that encourages good sportsmanship & good fellowship.

We bowl in three different leagues in two leagues we maintain Les our places ready for next season

However our teams that bowled in the North Essex Bowls League did exceptionally well, surprising themselves along the way.

They first entered the league in 2024, bowling in the third division, winning promotion to the second division in the same year.

This year they won promotion once again to the first division, a brilliant & consistent result over two years, well

done to all bowlers a magnificent result

They were brilliantly led by their captain Clive Brazier.

We wish all our teams well in the coming season.

So to the results in all our club completions.



Here are the winners

Paul Pearce Memorial Trophy  
Robert Connolly  
Helen Fish

Singles Champion  
Jack Jones

Doubles Champions  
Keith Choat  
Ian Englebright

Triples Champions  
Clive Brazier  
Chris Caulkett  
Don Jury

New Player of the Year  
Don Jury

League Winners  
Michael Claydon  
David Miller

It was very pleasing to see several of our new players winning awards.

Well done & many congratulations

Continued on page 11



## Birdbrook Ladies Group

quiz instead. Funnily enough, nobody wanted to play the games that I brought as an alternative. Our speaker, Hilary, was unable to attend. It was great fun, although there was a lot of complaining that it was too hard. I didn't have a problem, but I did set the questions and I had the answers!!!

### October



We, and some of our partners, were entertained by a local musician, David Caulfield. He had worked with many of the musicians from the 1960s. It was a very enjoyable evening as the majority of us remembered that era well. There were one or two blank faces from our younger members when David reminisced about the theme tunes for some adverts. Who remembers Esso Blue and SR toothpaste???

We listened to David play the guitar and sing songs from the Swinging Sixties accompanied by a slide show. He also shared stories from his time in the music business and brushing shoulders with the rich and famous.

### November

This month saw us making a Christmas ornament. The session was led by our own crafting guru, Laura. She has patiently taken us through a number of activities over the past few years. Laura assured us that it was an easy craft, just needing a glue gun and paper cake cases. What was also required was a steady hand and patience. She encouraged and guided those that needed a little help.



The baubles that were achieved would grace any Christmas tree. Mince pies and mulled wine were provided as refreshments and everyone enjoyed the evening.

We are now looking forward to our Christmas meal on 4th December at Haverhill Golf Club

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year and new members are always welcome at our meetings.

Sue King

## Programme of Events 2025 - 2026

4<sup>th</sup> December - Xmas Meal

8<sup>th</sup> January - Social Evening/planning

12<sup>th</sup> February - Heather: Homeopathy

12<sup>th</sup> March - Bryan Thurlow: 'Through the Green Baize Door'

9<sup>th</sup> April - To be arranged

14<sup>th</sup> May - AGM

Annual Membership: £25.00

We're a very friendly group, new members and visitors are always welcome.

Sue: s\_54king@hotmail.com

### September

In a change to our advertised talk, Sound Therapy, we had a



SUNDAY ROAST AT THE PLOUGH	
<b>SUNDAY ROAST</b>	<b>EXTRAS</b>
ROAST BEEF - £18.50	CARLITFLOWER CHEESE - £5
ROAST CHICKEN - £17.50	BOWL OF POTATOES - £5
VEGETARIAN ROAST - £17.50	UNLIMITED RED WINE GRavy HELP YOURSELF TO AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE BECAUSE A PROPER ROAST DESERVES PLUMBY OF GRavy!
"THE PLOUGH RIGHT IN ROAST" - £22.50 (ALL THE MEATS)	GLUTEN FREE AND VEGAN OPTIONS AVAILABLE BUT MUST BE PRE ORDERED AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE
<small>EACH PLATE COMES WITH HONEY-ROASTED CARROTS &amp; PARSNIPS, TENDERSTRAW AND CRILL, GARDEN ROAST POTATOES, SAGE &amp; ONION STUFFING, AND OUR FRESHLY BAKED YODERBIC PUDDING.</small>	<b>BOOKINGS ONLY</b> £10 PER PERSON DEPOSIT ON BOOKINGS OVER 4 PEOPLE
<b>DESSERTS</b>	
CHOCOLATE BROWNIE - £5.50	
STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING - £6.00	
APPLE PIE - £6.50	
ALL SERVED WITH ICE CREAM OR CUSTARD	



## Birdbrook Bowls Club

*continued from page 9*

Once again we were indebted to our green keeper Keith Choat & his dedicated team, who maintained our green through a very testing summer.

We also reached the final of the Steeple Bumpstead Cup acquitting ourselves very well, but alas coming a gallant second to a very strong team. Better luck next year.

All round an excellent & most enjoyable season of bowling for Birdbrook, a club who is beginning to be noticed.

So why not come along & find out for yourself, it will be good to see you.

Look out in the next issue of the BPN for dates for your diary.

It just leaves me on behalf of all club members, to wish you & your families a very happy happy Christmas and prosperous & successful 2026

Cary on Bowling

The Green Man  
<https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse/calendar/>

## RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

The Birdwatch began in 1979, when children's TV programme Blue Peter asked viewers to post in their sightings.

Top birds reported for 2025 were:

House Sparrow

Blue Tit

Woodpigeon

Starling

Blackbird

Birdwatch2026:  
23-25 January 2026



<https://www.rspb.org.uk>

## Birdbrook Community House

The Community House constitution can now be viewed on the website:

[https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse/Listed under 'Our Files'](https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse/Listed%20under%20Our%20Files)

Events and dates for 'What's on' can be checked on the Community House calendar:

<https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookcommunityhouse/>

## Zanna Newton PILATES

Zanna has been leading her 'highly recommended' Pilates classes since 2004.

Classes are available live on Zoom and also in Ridgewell, Stotfold and Melbourn (near Royston).

Please check the website where you can see class availability and book your place online.

[www.zannanewton.co.uk](http://www.zannanewton.co.uk)





## Events Around the Area

### Clare Christmas Fair

Clare Christmas Fair and Lights Switch-On 2025

The fabulous Clare Christmas Fair took place during the last weekend of November in St Peter and St Paul's Church and also in the Town Hall, both in the heart of Clare. Clare's spectacular Christmas lights were switched on Friday 28th November making the town an enchanting place to visit in December.

### Colne Valley Railway Santa Special

Take a short train ride to visit Santa in his parlour. Once you have seen Santa you can visit the workshop where children can choose their own present (grown ups and dogs collect their present from the shop on the way out) Christmas activities, model railway, signal box, museum and buffet carriage selling hot and cold food. Tickets must be pre-booked. [www.colnevalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.colnevalleyrailway.co.uk)

Event dates: Sat 6 Dec, Sun 7 Dec, Sat 13 Dec, Sun 14 Dec, Sat 20 Dec, Sun 21 Dec, Tue 23 Dec, Wed 24 Dec

### Braintree Village's Christmas ice rink

Braintree Village's ice rink is set to return for a third season as part of the Essex-based outlet village's Christmas celebrations. Tickets on sale now.

Set to create an enchanting environment for guests to enjoy throughout the fun-filled festive season, the 550-metre undercover ice rink will open to the public on Tuesday 11th November to Sunday 4 Jan 26.

<https://www.braintree-village.com/en/the-ice-rink-at-braintree-village>

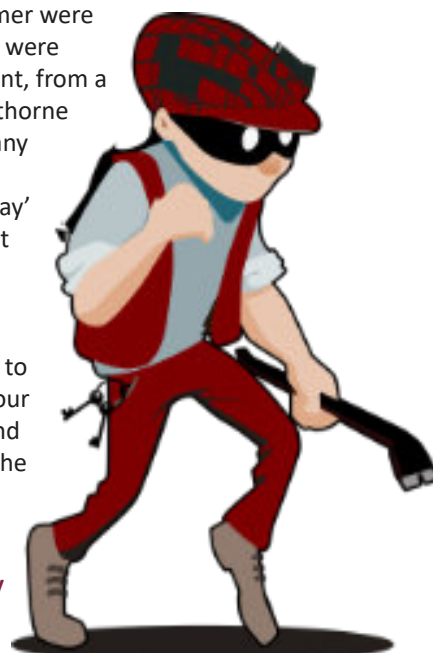
For more events visit: <https://www.wherecanwego.com/whats-on/birdbrook>

## Thefts from Sheds

At 3pm on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November strimmers, chain saw and hedge trimmer were stolen, while owners were home and cars present, from a locked garage in Baythorne End. If you know of any second hand goods offered at 'Black Friday' prices, please contact the police with information.

Be vigilant, take care to mark tools, secure your sheds and garages and report any crime to the police.

<https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>



## Local Scout Group

Looking for a local scouting group? At 1st Kedington we accept children from 6years old upwards  
Please contact us



### 1st Kedington

**BEAVERS**  
kedingtonbeavers@btinternet.com

**cubs**  
kedingtoncubs@gmail.com

**Scouts**  
sharon.eames01@btinternet.com

### Stambourne Chapel Care

Do you have a few hours to spare?  
**Would you like to make a difference  
to your community?**

We have vacancies for:

**Befriending**, both in person and telephone  
**Transport** to appointments or social events,**Help  
and Support with outings**, lunch club and more.

We also need **Administrative Support** and a  
**Treasurer** and support for **fund raising** and **writing  
grant proposals**.

If you feel this is for you please get in touch:  
[stambournechapelcare@gmail.com](mailto:stambournechapelcare@gmail.com)  
or Tel: 07883 423528

## Birdbrook Parish News

brought to you by Birdbrook Parish Council

<https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookparishcouncil/>

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<https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookparishcouncil/birdbrook-parish-news/>

Next edition:

News and adverts by 15th February for the March 2026 BPN

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