

# Birdbrook Parish News



## Birdbrook Village Pond

At the end of May, we began the long overdue clean up of the Village Pond. We have made some good progress clearing the footpaths, removing the Buddleia, some of the brambles, and a large overhanging shrub is mostly cut back.

Our ambition is to clear all overgrown shrubs and brambles add a water fountain to agitate the water to keep the algae under control.

We would like to re-wild the pond and introduce additional pond species to enhance this

pretty village feature.

We would like to thank our neighbours for the loan of their empty green bins for the cuttings, to Michael for his help with clearing the shrubs and to Paul of Plants That Grow for donating an empty Bulk Bag to hold the larger cuttings for disposal.

*Helen, Michelle and Shirley, Birdbrook Parish Council*



## Friday Coffee Mornings at Birdbrook Community House

All welcome, come along, 10am -12pm, meet your neighbours and enjoy a cuppa and an informal chat. Our community PCSOs often drop in, too.

## Parish Council Meeting Dates

7pm in the Community House

8 July 2026  
16 September 2026  
11 November 2026

# June 2026

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

Next edition:

News and adverts by 15 August for the September BPN  
Editor Val: [birdbrook2021@gmail.com](mailto:birdbrook2021@gmail.com)

**New Essex County Councillor**

I'm proud to serve as an Essex County Councillor representing our local rural communities. I was born and raised locally and alongside my council role I also work as a mechanic, so I understand the importance of hard work, practical solutions, and listening to people properly.



I'm passionate about standing up for residents, improving our roads and local services, and making sure the voices of villages like ours are heard at County Hall. I believe in being approachable, honest, and available to help wherever I can.

If you ever need to contact me, please feel free to email me at: [Cllr.nathan.robins@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.nathan.robins@essex.gov.uk)

**U3A Guitar Group in concert for REACH, 30th April 2026**



On the evening of 30th April, a concert was held at Haverhill Arts Centre to raise funds for Reach Community Projects. Performers, including the U3A Guitar Group, gave their time, free of charge for this event, which raise over £3,000 for REACH.

David Caulfield, leader of the U3A Guitar group, which meets every other Thursday afternoon, was a guest speaker for the Birdbrook ladies Group recently. *(continued below right)*

**St Augustine, Birdbrook**



We continue with services at St Augustine's Birdbrook even though our incumbent, Revd Lowe has now retired. We are fortunate to sometimes have Sue Cruse, David Buckley or visiting clergy, if not we operate a "do it yourself" service with the Churchwarden leading. The most important thing is to keep the church going with regular services.

The second Sunday is Morning Prayer the fourth Sunday is a Benefice Service encompassing all six churches.

We would be delighted to welcome new worshippers or indeed welcome back old ones !! Noisy small children included ! We always serve tea/coffee after services so everyone can have a friendly chat & a catch up.

Judi Price  
Churchwarden 01440 730506



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Reach, an independent, Haverhill-based charity, run by volunteers, believes in a relational handholding approach to helping families and individuals who are suffering from or struggling with the effects of financial crisis or hardship. They offer debt advice, benefit help, housing, emergency food, utility assistance and more.

REACH aims to proactively tackle poverty rather than reactively responding to financial hardship, determined and passionate to work towards flourishing, thriving and resilient people in the communities they support.

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

## Hello from your District Councillor



Welsh database and although we do not yet know the level of registration fee being set for England, the Welsh charge is £102 for first registration and £87 for renewals (per property). The Government will also introduce a new Ombudsman.

### **Renters' Rights Act 2025**

Last year the Government published their planned phased implementation of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 for 2026 – 2035. The new legislation is complex. About 19% of English housing stock is privately rented (nearly 1 in 5). BDC has received £109k New Burden Funding so far. There remains so much unknown.

There is a clear shift to mandatory enforcement which produces a duty for the local authority (BDC) to monitor and enforce the Act in the district, without discretion. It is a statutory requirement for the authority to report their enforcement activities and income generated, quarterly to MLCHG. BDC will give civil penalties for serious or repeated breaches. Fines range from £5,000 to £40,000.

Tenant Advisory Services are already gearing up to pursue local authorities who they feel have failed in their duty. The Government is already monitoring local authority enforcement activity and outputs in pilot areas as part of the new private rented sector enforcement data collection to ensure local authorities are meeting their duties.

▪ **Phase 1**; 1st May 2026 saw the introduction of a transformative new tenancy system, empowering tenants to challenge poor practice in the sector. 'No fault' (Sec 21) evictions are abolished. A Landlord can recover their property under specific grounds. Tenants will be able to leave giving two months' notice. There will also be a ban on rental bidding and end discrimination against tenants such as those with children or benefits status. Landlords can only increase rent once a year, following a specific process. There is a ban on rental bidding and upfront payments. Property is advertised at a defined rent. Quality of life for tenants is considered and they can request permission to have pets in the property. The landlord can refuse an unreasonable request. What is 'unreasonable' remains vague and will probably be defined over time by case law.

▪ **Phase 2**; from late 2026 a new Private Rented Sector Database will be introduced, providing local authorities with clear data, where they will commence spot-checks under new enhanced powers of investigation to make enforcement easier. A registration number is given to the property/landlord. The database will be publicly accessible/searchable. It will be based on the existing



## Foot Care

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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FOOT HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

▪ **Phase 3**; the Government will focus on raising standards through the extension of Awaab's Law. A modernised Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector will be introduced from around 2035. Awaab was two years old when he died in a social property (not private). Multiple complaints were made about the extreme mould and damp to the Landlord but the speed of an eventual response was too slow to save Awaab's life.

Helpful information:

BDC: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/homepage/470/renters-rights-act-2025>

Landlords: <https://www.nrla.org.uk/resources/renters-rights>

Tenants: <https://england.shelter.org.uk/>

### **Rural England Prosperity Fund**

Rural businesses and community groups have received a £156,202 boost thanks to grants awarded by BDC from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund. 18 projects have been awarded grants from £2,000 to £20,000 to support capital improvements in rural areas. A further £20,522 has been allocated with the remaining projects due to complete at the end of August, ensuring the full government funding allocation is being utilised as intended. The initiative is designed to encourage business growth and create employment opportunities in rural areas. This will help improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities.

### **Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) - Public Consultation**

Braintree District Council has a public consultation on a proposed district-wide Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). The consultation will run to Monday 15 June 2026. Have your say!

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/council/public-spaces-protection-order-pspo-consultation>

### **Scheduled Roadworks – Mill Road, Baythorne End**

I have received details of the intended closure of Mill Road, Baythorne End, due to commence on 23rd July 2026 for 6 nights (20:00-06:00) while Essex County Council undertakes Inlay surfacing.

### **Your New Essex County Councillor**

Cllr. Nathan Robins (Reform UK) won the Essex County Council seat for our Hedingham Division. Cllr. Robins also sits on Stambourne Parish Council and won a by-election for a seat at Braintree District Council in March 2026 for the Coggeshall Ward. Cllr. Robins is 19 years old and is an apprentice mechanic and now also our local politician.



You can contact him by email: [cllr.nathan.robins@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.nathan.robins@essex.gov.uk) for all enquiries regarding highways, footpaths, road signs, child and adult social care, education, etc.

### **Essex County Council Leader Opposes Local Government Reorganisation**

New Leader of ECC, Cllr. Peter Harris (Reform UK) has written to the secretary of state for housing, communities and local government, MP Steve Reed. The letter contained:

*"Accordingly, as my first formal action as Reform UK group leader at Essex, I yesterday instructed that lawyers prepare a pre-action protocol letter ..."*  
*"Please be in no uncertainty. We will resist the premise of LGR robustly ..."*

Read the letter in full at:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news>.

On Wednesday evening Cabinet at BDC approved fixed penalty notices for breaches of household waste-related requirements. This is set to commence from 1st June 2026. Full details can be found in the Cabinet meeting Agenda dated 20th May 2026. Condensed information on page 7.

*With best wishes to all,  
Cllr. Diana Garrod*

Braintree District Councillor for the Bumpstead Ward

## Birdbrook Ladies Group

### March

This month saw the return of speaker Bryan Thurlow, who entertained us with stories of his alter ego, George Barrington, a butler from the Victorian era.

Dressed as the butler and with props to enhance his storytelling, he kept the group entertained with tales of life below stairs in a grand Yorkshire house. He started out as a boot boy and became good friends with one of the housemaids, Dora, until her sudden departure. George rose through the ranks to become the butler of the house until his retirement. He discovered that Dora had moved back to a house nearby and purchased a house in the same village so they could spend their retirement together.

### April

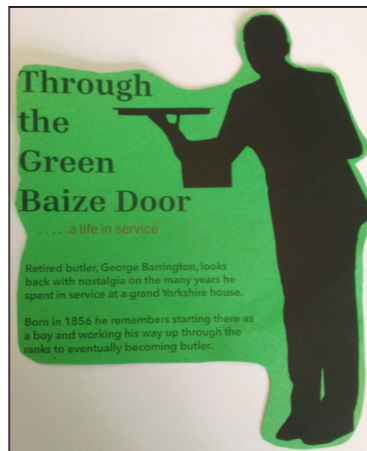
Our speaker for this month was one of our members, Hilary, who is the group's Treasurer. She told us how she became interested in Sound Therapy during Covid, taking part in tutorials/sessions online. As all our lives at that time were very much restricted, it was a way to have contact with others and connect with people. Hilary told us about Gong Baths and brought along some bowls as well as other percussion instruments. We were able to experiment with them and Hilary showed us the different ways to make the bowls "sing". With a tuning fork we were able to feel the vibrations. We finished the session with a bit of a boogie to Marc Bolan whilst tapping or banging our drums and instruments.



We completed our programme for 2026/27 and hopefully there will be something to interest everyone

### May

This month was our Annual General Meeting, whilst not being very exciting, is necessary. It gives us a



**Group meetings take place at 7.30 p.m on the 2nd Thursday of each month at Birdbrook Community House.**

**Visitors are most welcome.**

### Programme

- June 11<sup>th</sup> 2026 - Clare Country Park - walk 7pm start
- July 9<sup>th</sup> - Miles @ Morgans butchery
- August 13<sup>th</sup> - BBQ/Picnic at Sue's
- Sept 11<sup>th</sup> - 'Out of Africa' - Clare Richardson
- October 8<sup>th</sup> - Claire Palmer - Visit to "Living Well Clare"
- November 12<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Crafting: Laura Walker
- December 3<sup>rd</sup> - Christmas Meal
- Jan 14<sup>th</sup> 2027 - Social Evening/planning
- February 11<sup>th</sup> - Children's Author Nan Eshelby
- March 11<sup>th</sup> - Crafting for Easter
- April 8<sup>th</sup> - Sharing Artefacts/Travel Souvenirs
- May 13<sup>th</sup> - AGM

chance to look back over past speakers, get feedback from members and agree the accounts for the year.

Elections were held for the posts of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary.

Sue King - Chairperson  
Hilary Hoyle - Treasurer  
Secretary - Mary Ann Pryke & Carol Harding

After all the required business was completed, there were refreshments and the evening finished with a few games of Bingo. No cash prizes, just chocolate and fun. Laura seemed to have charmed the numbers and won twice.

Our next meeting in June is a trip to Clare Country Park.  
Sue King, Chairs\_54king@hotmail.com



*Birdbrook Bowls Club Annual Open Day and BBQ Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026*

### Fixed Penalty Notices for Breaches of Household Waste-Related Requirements

The implementation of Fixed Penalty Notices for breaches of household waste-related Requirements was agreed by Cabinet 20/05/26. This was introduced by Cllr. Tom Cunningham in accordance with BDC's Household Waste and Recycling Collection Policy 2025. It is set to commence from 1st June 2026. Residents have a legal duty of care to present their waste in line with the Council's requirements. Key requirements set out in the Council's Policy include:

- All household waste shall be placed in the appropriate container designated for its category; recyclable materials in the recycling container, residual waste in the general waste container, and garden waste in the garden waste container; in accordance with the prescribed method of presentation for collection.
- Following collection, waste receptacles must be returned to the curtilage of the property within a reasonable time frame.
- Householders shall not present side waste, defined as any waste not presented in accordance with the prescribed method for collection.

Where a household fails to comply, the Council has powers to issue written warnings. Continued non-compliance can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice, which carries a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal. Non-statutory guidance on the use of penalties for non-compliance with household waste collection requirements emphasises that enforcement should be proportionate and targeted at cases causing genuine harm to the local environment. Penalties will not be issued for minor issues. The Council will adopt an educational approach before issuing penalties, such as providing households with written advice or information and including engagement visits. The Fixed Penalty Notice will be for £80, with a discounted rate of £60 for payment within 10 days.



*Castle Camps winning team from President's Day*



## Birdbrook Bowls Club

The new season for the Bowls Club is very much up and running for 2026. This year, even though he is still bowling, Alan Cook has handed on the duties of treasurer and news reporter, positions he has held for a number of years. Club members are very grateful to Alan for his years of service and his continued dedication to the club.

The club organises a number of social evenings through the Winter months ensuring that members keep in touch until the Spring arrives. Despite the variable weather our greenkeeper Keith, together with his happy band, managed to prepare the green in time for our Open Day on April 19<sup>th</sup>. We were very pleased to welcome new members, some of whom are experienced bowlers and some who are new to bowling. We are always pleased to meet and greet bowlers of all abilities. We have several sets of woods which belong to the club, therefore ensuring that new members can instantly join in and, "Have a go".

Just a few weeks after the opening of the green we hosted the annual President's Day tournament. Twenty clubs from across Essex played in the knockout competition held on the day. We started with bacon rolls and coffee in the morning to ensure the stamina needed to get

through all of the rounds. We provided a two-course lunch for eighty people through the marvellous efforts of some of our social members. As in past years, a very good day was enjoyed by everyone with one of the teams from Castle Camps winning the day. We may be one of the smallest clubs in the league but we certainly come near the top of the list when it comes to hospitality.

Now the green resounds to a mixture of league matches with other clubs, in-house competitions and Wednesday evening friendly roll-ups, often followed by a quiet drink and a bit of a chatter in our bar. If anyone would like to have a try then any Wednesday evening from 6pm. is the time to come along, you will be made most welcome.

Martin Gilbert



*Above right: new gate  
Right: First home match of the season*

