

Birdbrook Parish News



The Ancient House in Clare the smallest museum in Suffolk

In Clare, the Ancient House Museum (AHM), is run by volunteers and organised by the Trustees of the Clare Ancient House Museum Trust, chaired by Antonia Brandes. The history of this tiny jewel of a 14th- century building reflects the vicissitudes of East Anglia and its history from shop to bakery, workhouse, poultry dealer, and church sexton, amongst its many uses. It was saved by Charles Byford, a Clare businessman, who purchased it in 1937 to save it from being shipped off to America! He gave it to the Parish Council. It is right next to the



Church of St Peter and Paul on the High Street in Clare. The building underwent sensitive renovations in the 1990s to remove the masonry paint and use lime paint. The house's unique decorative plasterwork called pargeting was restored and remains a major draw for tourists and visitors.

(Continued on next page)

March 2024

The Ancient House in Clare (continued)

Last year there was an exhibition throughout the season on the Shops in Clare and this year given the volume of information, there will be changing exhibitions on Celebrating Clare: Festivals Past and Present. The Museum and the exhibition open on 30 March.

There are no entrance fees, although donations are very welcome.

This is the programme for 2024:

Saturday, 30 March: Midday Exhibition opens with Carnival theme
 Saturday, 4 May: Exhibition – World Music Festival and Musical Events
 Saturday, 1 June Exhibition – Arts Crafts and Theatre
 Saturday, 29 June Exhibition theme changes to Community
 Saturday, 27 July Exhibition theme changes to Historical, Military and Royal
 [Sunday, 28 July Museum Closed for Friends' Summer Lunch]
 Saturday, 31 August Exhibition theme changes to Christmas Events.
 Saturday, 28 September the Museum and the Exhibition close.

If you are interested in helping/volunteering, please do contact Chris Allan AHM Trustee (chris.allan@gunnercooke.com). The museum opens from Easter to the end of September on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The sessions are in 2 hour slots: (i) noon – 2pm; and (ii) 2pm – 4pm.

There are other ways to help out – homemade jams and marmalade are on sale and donations of preserves are most welcome. Last year, at the end of the summer I volunteered briefly at the Ancient House Museum to be a steward and I plan to return and help out for this season – it is a fun way to welcome visitors to our area and to meet people in Clare. Baythorne End is a mere 4 miles to Clare. See you in the museum over the spring and summer!

Joan Porter MacIver, Baythorne End



St Augustine, Birdbrook

Boiled or Fried?

Forty minutes for a soft-boiled egg sounds like overkill. And if it's chickens you keep in your garden, that would undoubtedly be the case. If however, you're an ostrich farmer, forty minutes seems just about right.

Decorating eggs is a practice with a long history. Sumerians and Egyptians who lived more than five thousand years ago placed embellished eggs in graves, and in parts of Africa, engraved ostrich eggs that had been used as water carriers have been found which date from some 60,000 years ago.



Eggs had, quite understandably, been a symbol of fertility and rebirth when Christians began using them as a symbol of the empty tomb of the very first Easter. The outside of the egg appears dead, but inside there is new life about to break out. For Christians, it's a reminder that when Jesus rises from the tomb he brings new life too.

Early Christians in Mesopotamia began staining the eggs red in memory of the blood of Jesus shed at his crucifixion. The custom spread from there through the Orthodox Church to Russia and then through the Catholic & Protestant churches into Europe and beyond. And so Easter & eggs became inextricably linked.

The shelves of our national supermarkets will be loaded to capacity with hundreds of different chocolate eggs at Easter. From Cadbury to Green & Blacks, to Lego, every brand wants to take a chunk of the market– but for so many consumers, the reason we have the eggs at this time of year is, at best, fuzzy.

The Meaningful Chocolate Company is trying to change that with their Real Easter Egg. Up to Easter last year, they have sold more than 1.8 million of their Fairtrade eggs. Each of them comes with a beautifully illustrated 24-page Easter story activity book that explains the meaning of Easter: New Life.

That's what Christians celebrate at Easter. Jesus Christ who was beaten, whipped, crucified and died, is alive again. And because of his death and resurrection, New Life in God is available to everyone.

Happy Easter!
 Blessings,
 Jonathan

St Augustine, Birdbrook Services:

Sunday 31st March: 10:30am Easter Day Holy Communion
 Sunday 14th April: 10:30am Morning Worship
 Sunday 28th April: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion
 Sunday 12th May: 10:30am Morning Worship
 Sunday 26th May: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion

vicar@2rivers.faith Church Warden: Judi Price 01440 730506

Kedington Community Association in association with Banger Town Classics and Outcasts Elite present

The 3rd Annual Vehicle Show

West Suffolk CLASSIC

Sunday 28th July 2024
 10.30am - 4pm
 The Great Meadow,
 Arms Lane, Kedington CB9 7QQ

Free to enter:
 Classic or Modified Car, Motorcycle,
 Light Commercial, Tractor, Off road Vehicles

Bar, Café & Toilets onsite
 PLUS Local Pub at entrance & well stocked shop 100 metres from entrance

PLEASE NOTE
 All vehicles MUST BE PRE-BOOKED
 via email

In the first instance please email Kirk Pearson
bangertownclassics@gmail.com
kedington-community-association.org.uk Registered Charity No: 304906



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: gemmasfootcare@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

Vaccinations for Travel

For a trip to Morocco earlier this month, my daughter received her vaccinations free of charge from her local surgery. Unity Health told me they no longer offered advice or vaccinations for travel and referred me to a private travel clinic. This cost £145 for Hepatitis A and Cholera.

After the same experience, Angela from Steeple Bumpstead followed up with Unity Health. Their reply was:

"Unfortunately this no longer something that is offered here as a practice for a number of years. some surgeries have started doing travel clinics again and some not. The nurses here have not had any new update training for quite some time and as such we are unable to offer travel vaccinations here.

I suggest you go to dedicated travel clinic who will be able to get these vaccinations for you for your travels."

This was raised at a recent PPG meeting, outlining the apparent differences between the two GP surgeries in Haverhill and the resulting potential inequality in provision. Despite NHS policy there is much inequality across the country.

To contact the PPG, Email: ppg.unityhealth@gmail.com

Val Rhenius

From the NHS website:

"The following travel vaccines are available free on the NHS from your GP surgery:

polio (given as a combined diphtheria/tetanus/polio jab)

typhoid
 hepatitis A
 cholera

These vaccines are free because they protect against diseases thought to represent the greatest risk to public health if they were brought into the country."

www.nhs.uk/conditions/travel-vaccinations/

From our Bird Ringing Expert in Birdbrook

Barry Williams

Part 3 – New Millenium – New countries!!-Terrible Food!!

As the new millenium came and went my hunger to visit new countries and research new species became almost an addiction. As well as an understanding wife I also enjoyed a quite relaxed work schedule enabling me to accept any invitation I received to join bird ringing expeditions.

As well as almost annual trips to Uganda between 1997 and 2002, I also re-visited Hong Kong on 3 more occasions and in August 2001 I was invited to join my pal Paul Leader (who by now was a Hong Kong resident) on a fact finding trip to the Xinjiang province of North West China. Paul was planning to co-write a book on the birds of China and wanted to prove that some species of European birds did breed in western China. It had been suspected that they did but we needed to find firm evidence that they had successfully reared young. I don't know if many of you have flown internally in China and whilst our first flight from Hong Kong to Xi'an was relatively normal, our onward flight to Urumqi was a real eye-opener. The check in at the airport was chaotic to say the least, nobody seemed to queue and everyone seemed to just shout, it was a complete free-for-all!! Fortunately being taller than the average chinese person and using my loud cockney voice we enabled to clear a path through the crowd and we just caught our flight! The flight itself was also interesting. Everyone was using their mobile phones during the flight, the chief pilot came out of the cockpit just after take-off, ate a huge meal and promptly fell asleep until we were close to landing. And finally, as we were on our final approach, passengers started getting their bags down from the over-head lockers and moving towards the exits!!!

Once in Urumqi we linked up with our guide (a professor from Beijing University) and his driver, who proudly showed us our transport for the trip; a 30 seater single decker bus! As there were only 3 of us plus our two local guides we enjoyed plenty of space! The trip itself was a complete success, we proved that Reed and Sedge warblers do in fact breed in north west China and I also saw and ringed some amazing birds. The accommodation was basic (a tent) and the food was appalling. Rice and noodles and sometimes noodles and rice. Decent

meat was a rarity and I never want to eat cows stomach ever again!!!! Oh yes, and Paul's pal Geoff lost his passport on the first day in Xinjiang and had to fly back to Hong Kong via Beijing!! Would I go back.....of course!! As you will recall from the last episode I had a falling in love with Uganda and by 2000 I had been there 4 times. Perhaps I should try somewhere else I thought, so when Brian Manton, my old gull-ringing pal from Pitsea suggested Kenya I jumped at the chance. He was planning to visit Ngulia, an old hunting lodge in Tsavo West National Park where in November and December millions of migratory birds stop off on their flight down to southern Africa. Specific weather conditions create mists at night which temporarily halt the birds southerly movement and create an incredible build up of birds in the gardens around the lodge. With the right conditions you can ring over 3,000 birds in one night/morning session.

The project has been running since 1969 and has caught and ringed over 500,000 birds. In 2000 (my first year) we ringed over 27,000 in two weeks but if the mists don't occur the birds keep flying and you ring very few. On my visit in 2022 we only ringed approximately 8,000 birds many of which were Swallows called in by playing recordings of the song and calls. The other attraction of Ngulia is the non-avian wildlife in the park. Leopards are common and sometimes you have to wait for them to move out of the area before you can erect your nets at night. Buffalo are a common visitor to the ponds at the lodge and occasionally you get a herd of elephants come to drink just 30 yards from the nets; that's usually when we take a tea break!! Needless to say 2000 was not the



Painted Snipe

only time I've visited Ngulia; I returned the following year, took my daughter Lucie there in 2004 and went back again in 2012 and 2022.

I had ringed in Turkey a couple of times with one of my pals from Hertfordshire, Barry Trevis and in 2002 he asked me if I wanted to accompany him on a ringing trip to Kazakhstan. He had already been there and it was apparent from his tales that it was a stunning place to go bird ringing. So in May 2002 myself Barry and 2 other guys made our way to the Chokpak bird observatory in southern Kazakhstan. Having met our guide, Andrei Gabrilov in Almaty, we made the day long journey across the steppes to Chokpak. In 2002 Kazakhstan had not felt the full effects of the oil boom, roads were mainly un-made, cars were few and far between with donkey-carts being the usual form of transport away from the larger towns.

When we arrived there at Chokpak I was quite horrified to find snow everywhere; apparently they'd had 4 inches fall two days previously!! I was not prepared for snow but was assured it would warm up and fortunately it did. We slept in old army trucks but the main accommodation was a yurt where we ate, drank and generally socialised with the local people, none of whom spoke English. My fears that the food was going to be as poor as it had been in China were soon allayed and meals consisted of bread and cheese for breakfast, eleven's and lunch (I don't eat eggs!) and lashings of stew for dinner. I never did find out what meat went in the stew but it was full of fresh vegetables and was delightful. Another local custom I soon got used to was the offer of a nip of vodka with every meal (except breakfast). It was also a tradition with dinner to stand up and make a speech and toast your fellow diners. This usually involved downing the vodka in one and so sleeping was never an issue on this trip.

Although based in Chokpak we travelled around quite a bit in the two week we were there and again we ringed some amazing birds. I went back there in 2007 and was quite staggered to see how it had changed. The effect of how wealth can change a country was clear to see. The roads were much busier, Range Rovers and other 4X4's were everywhere and the wonderful wilderness areas we visited were already starting to be affected. One fantastic wetland area which had been full of birds was full of 4X4's and all that you could hear was the endless sound of shotguns!!

I think space has beaten me again and I promise the 4th episode will be a the last one....only South Africa, Canada and Mexico for next time!!
.....to be continued!



Little Bee Eater

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

Braintree Council Bulky Waste Collection Service

Too big to take to the tip?

Not enough to warrant the expense of a skip?

www.braintree.gov.uk/bins-waste-recycling/bulky-waste-collectiondocumentId=397&cate-goryId=20003

A View from the Bridge A Tale of Two Counties

After 30 years I probably know a thing or two about the Baythorne Bridge and have many stories to tell! Without any doubt, this beautiful old bridge built in the age of horse and cart, suffers from an ever-growing volume of traffic and frequent use by increasingly large and heavy vehicles. Many readers will have experienced the hazards of crossing the bridge by car or on foot, and recently encountered the worst series of potholes I have ever seen. So many damaged tyres and wheels, angry motorists and frightened pedestrians. Repairs had been scheduled for early January, then re-scheduled to 19th February. An outcry of complaints coupled with an excellent article in the Haverhill Echo seemingly resulted in bringing forward repairs to the night of 2nd February.

But I want to talk about my experiences of trying to get action on many unsafe aspects of the bridge. I have reported issues on Suffolk and Essex Highways websites and had useful conversations with Highways' officials on numerous occasions over the years. The results have been stopgap measures or no action at all. Only quite recently did I realise the importance of getting the Parish Council involved. The Parish Council has since been gathering a great deal of information on a range of issues and has successfully escalated to the attention of District and County Councillors. Action is complicated because the county boundary line passes mid-way through the bridge. Practical responsibilities are divided: Suffolk Highways has bridge maintenance; Essex Highways the Essex side approach road. However, so many of the issues are interconnected and cannot be resolved unless Suffolk and Essex Highways

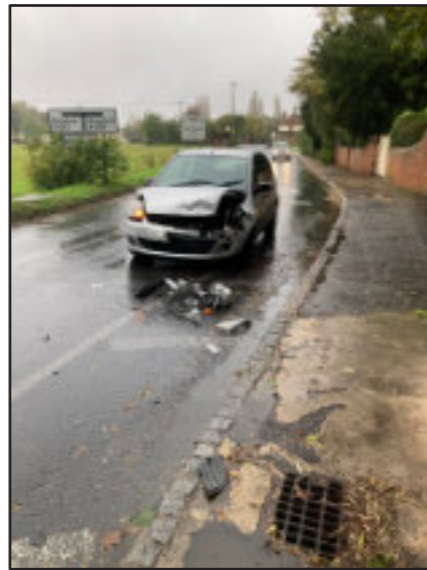


take co-ordinated action, which so far appears impossible.

What are the issues?

1. Potholes get worse if not repaired properly, and their lifespan is shortened by heavy and speeding

traffic. Public money is wasted if work must be repeated over and over again. The irony of recent repairs is that traffic has resumed speeding over the bridge and in less than 24 hours we witnessed another prolonged and angry altercation.



2. Do you know what the bridge speed limit is? It is the 60mph national speed limit! Essex de-restricts from 40mph about 30m before the bridge and Suffolk a lot further back. How does this make sense on a narrow one-way bridge with an unprotected pedestrian walkway?

3. Do you know the direction of traffic priority? There's a poorly positioned sign immediately before the bridge wall on the Essex side, with white halt lines about 10m back. Very few drivers stop in the right place, many do not, resulting in frequent angry confrontations. Why are properly positioned motion activated warning signs not being used? Why have road markings not been improved and refreshed?

4. Do you feel safe walking over the bridge? The walkway used to be clearly delineated with white lines and a yellow finish. The surface is now uneven, broken and littered with gravel from failed road fillings. Loose cobble stones marking the edge were secured during repairs, but many are missing and have been filled with tarmac. I have been horrified to see young children dropped off at our driveway by the school bus, and then left to walk across the bridge.

I am not naturally a campaigner, but I also don't give up if there is an important matter that can be resolved. Public money is scarce, every county is struggling to prioritise expenditure, but there are lives at risk here. The process of getting action is slow and bureaucratic but I feel that, through the efforts of the Parish Council, these important matters are at last getting attention. I will end by urging you to not be part of the 'silent majority': report road issues on the Highways' websites, engage with the Parish Council where appropriate, and perhaps make time to support its work by volunteering.

David McIver

Birdbrook Community House



The Community House team has been busy since the last Birdbrook News was published. In order to comply with the new fire legislation a new fire alarm system has been installed together with new emergency exit lighting. There are two grant applications in progress, if accepted they will help with financing the social hub and the loft insulation at the Community House.

Also, we would like to thank everyone who has supported the new social club and the Roasts and Fish & Chips events recently, the feedback

has been very positive and we look forward to your continued support. Please check social media for updates on future functions. The Community House has information on the website:

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

Please contact Steve, Katie, or Matt if you are interested, or have any questions:

Stephen Filbey steve.filbey@gmail.com

Matt Unwin matt@unwinstates.co.uk

Katie Gentry katie_owner@hotmail.com

Clothing Bank Collection January 2024

Fantastic funds raised via clothing bank

A big THANK YOU to everyone using the clothing bank situated at Birdbrook Community House, the first collection raised a fantastic

£71.50

All funds raised go straight back into the maintenance and running costs of Birdbrook Community House to ensure we can keep providing the community with a wide variety of events as well as a hire space for Parties, christenings, community events and wedding receptions.

.....BIRDBROOK SOCIAL CLUB

*The next 3 social hubs
at Birdbrook Community House,
Everyone welcome*

Saturday 6th April 2024 6pm-10pm

Saturday 4th May 2024 6pm-10pm

Saturday 1st June 2024 6pm-10pm



Christmas celebrations at The Friday morning Warm Hub, December 23

Hello from your District Councillor

56 Home Planning Appeal Dismissed Over Poorly Designed Development

The refusal of a proposed development of 56 homes in Great Bardfield has been upheld by a Planning Inspectorate. This was over concerns on the significant effect to the character and appearance of the area and poor design. Over 80 objections were received during the public consultation from residents and statutory partners and the application was refused by the Council's Planning Committee in November 2022 on the advice of officers. Reasons included that the site could not satisfactorily accommodate the number of homes proposed to an acceptable design and layout.

New Policy for Household Waste and Recycling Collections

From 1st April 2023 a new policy for Household Waste and Recycling collections will be implemented. This includes the non-collection of additional waste put out for collection that is not contained within grey wheeled bins, referred to as side waste. In comparison to other councils in Essex, the tonnage of waste collected in grey wheeled bins in the Braintree District is significantly higher. Last year, Braintree District households generated the fourth highest volume of residual waste in Essex, averaging to 463.58 kgs of waste per household. Therefore, the council will be ceasing the collection of all side waste from 1 April 2024 and will only collect waste which is presented in the grey bin and the lid must be shut. There are many local authorities across the country that already do not collect side waste, including those in Essex.

If a resident's bin is missed on their collection day, under the new policy, they will need to report it to the council after 3pm on the day of collection and no later than 12 noon on the next working day and should leave their bin at their normal collection point. The collection crew will return to collect it within 2 working days of receiving a missed bin report. The weekly collections for properties which have communal bins, such as flats, will remain the same.



There is still no restriction to the number of clear recycling sacks residents can put out for collection, providing they contain the correct items. One of the aims of the new policy is to support a more circular economy by keeping resources in use for as long as possible, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling to extend the life cycle of products.

How Much Recycling is Rejected?

Of the total waste collected (56,326 tonnes) from December 2022 to November 2023, 1,337 tonnes of Dry Mixed Recycling was sent to Suffolk's Energy from Waste Facility. This represents 2.38% of the total waste that could not be recycled as it was contaminated.

Fly Tipping Prosecution

A 39-year-old businessman from Great Notley in Braintree, was sentenced at Colchester Magistrates Court for two offences of fly-tipping. In November 2021,

following work carried out at a property by his company, he unlawfully deposited a barbecue, and was subsequently captured on camera fly-tipping builders' waste onto a public footpath in Bradwell, Braintree in the same month. He had entered a guilty plea at a previous hearing. He was fined £3,231.00, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £190.00 and pay the Council's costs of £4,399.30.

BDC Handyman Scheme

The BDC Handyman scheme is available for all homeowners over 65 in the district and is free of charge. <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/energy-efficient-homes#1>

Major Housing Grants

BDC makes major housing grants for:

- installing hot water or heating systems
 - repairing hot water or heating systems
- You 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. T: 01376 552525.

Community Infrastructure Grant Fund

A £100,000 fund has been launched to provide grants to community groups wishing to reduce their carbon output. This is part of a three-year investment plan funded from central government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The capital funding is available to existing constituted groups such as charities, associations, parish councils, voluntary and community groups, to make changes to physical structures such as:

- Installing sources of renewable energy to buildings or their surroundings
- Installing energy efficiency measures such as insulation or LED lighting to buildings or their surroundings
- Installing or embedding other capital projects which reduce carbon emissions to buildings or their surroundings

More information at: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/braintree-district/climate-change-1/7>

Braintree District Council sets budget of £19.6 million for 2024-25

With 60% of the council's net budget being funded from council tax, this will increase by an extra 11p per week based on a Band D

property to help protect services, ensure that unavoidable cost pressures can be met and to support longer-term financial stability. Braintree District Council continues to remain one of the lowest council tax rates in Essex and below the national average of shire districts.

With best wishes to all,

Cllr. Diana Garrod

Braintree District Councillor for the
Bumpstead Ward



**SATURDAY 15th and
SUNDAY 16th JUNE 2024**

***D-Day inspired events
spread throughout the
benefice***

***(Steeple Bumpstead,
Helions Bumpstead,
Sturmer, Birdbrook,
Ridgewell and Ashen)***

***to include
LIVE BAND AND DANCING,
CHILDRENS' ENTERTAINER,
VINTAGE CAR EVENT, FLIP
REDMAN ENTERTAINER
and displays of
memorabilia or flowers in
many of the churches.***

Birdbrook Ladies Group



December

Our annual Christmas meal, highlight of our year, was held at the Three Horseshoes in Helions Bumpstead. The food was delicious, and the attention and service was excellent. One member is gluten free and she was particularly impressed with her food. As usual there was a good section of Secret Santa gifts - it's surprising what you can find for £5!!! This venue would definitely be considered again for Ladies Group.

January

Unusually, there was a very good turnout for this planning meeting. Members came with lots of interesting suggestions for the programme 2024/25. These included visiting a nearby garden, a Styling Masterclass, musician and an entertainer. Hopefully we will be able to book a number of these speakers to provide a varied programme for the forthcoming year.



February

This month saw Ladies Group holding a quiz evening with Martin Gilbert as our quizmaster. There was a very good turnout for this evening with a number of members managing to entice their partners along. As usual, Martin provided a great section of categories with some interesting spot questions between the rounds. Members brought their own nibbles and refreshments to fuel the "little grey cells" during the evening. The winning team was Dipso, Lala and Po, aka Andy, Alison and Sue. Everyone had a great evening showing a broad depth of random knowledge!

Programme of Events 2023 - 2024

March 14th - Easter Craft

April 11th - Mindful Art

May 9th - AGM

Annual Membership: £25.00

**Our new programme will start in June
New members and visitors are always
welcome.**

Birdbrook Parish Council - your community - needs You!

NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY Birdbrook Parish Council

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a vacancy has occurred in the office of Parish Councillor for Birdbrook Parish Council.

An election to fill the vacancy will be held if ten local government electors for the electoral area so request. Such request should be made in writing and must include name, address and signature. Requests must be submitted to the Proper Officer (Chief Executive) of Braintree District Council at Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree CM7 9HB. The deadline for receipt of requests is no later than 5:00pm on 20th March 2024.

If an election is not requested as aforesaid the vacancy will be filled by the Parish Council as soon as is practicable.

1st March 2024

Why volunteer?

** Get to know the
locality and people
better*

**Find out more on how
local government works*

**Your chance to
influence best outcomes*

**Adds to your CV*

*Any questions?
Debbie, Parish Clerk:
debbiehilliard614
@gmail.com*

Birdbrook Bowls Club

Hello loyal readers, on this occasion this report is written with a marvellous Celtic flare & with a touch of the Blarney for which I am eternally grateful.

As reported in the last issue, the Birdbrook Bowls Club had a successful 2023 season so they did. They finished just outside the promotion spots in the Steeple Bumpstead league & reached two semi finals in the two cup competitions they entered. Never content to rest on their laurels, the club members have set themselves the goal of achieving promotion in the league's played in 2024

When asked to comment - Club Treasurer Alan Cook said "With our current squad of excellent bowlers, we are confident the club can do even better this season, gain promotion & hopefully pick up one or two pieces of silverware along the way." That said, we are always on the look out for new members"

So even if you have never rolled a wood (that's the ball to you & me) & fancy having a go, you're more than welcome to come along & have a go. Alan gave a wink & said "You never know you might be a natural!"

The club & its members are a friendly bunch as I can attest to. You will be made most welcome on club nights. They take their bowling very seriously & like all sports people are fiercely competitive on the green. But when the serious work is over, they thoroughly enjoy a drink & a blether* in the BOWLERS ARMS as we Irish would say, the craic is always good.

If you don't fancy stepping onto the green & aiming at the Jack, there are lots of other ways to make a contribution to the future success of the club. Because it's not all about bowling. Yes it is a bowling club but without a green to play on there's not much point in proudly pulling on the team colours & turning up for a match.

The playing surface at Birdbrook has historically been one of the best in Essex if not the largest. Under the care of Leigh Carter & his team the grass was verdant at the start of every season. As you are aware, Leigh stepped down as green keeper at the end of last season to face new challenges, his own garden maybe.

We were delighted when Keith Choat stepped up to coordinate the tending of the green. The green is a living breathing thing, keeping it in prime condition & in a match ready condition requires a lot of work even in the off season. Weeding to scarifying, top dressing to regular mowing, but most important of all, fettling the Baroness, look to future issues for more It certainly doesn't happen by chance. Keith & his dedicated team, volunteers all, keep our green match ready & looking as well as it does, for which the club are most grateful.

If you would like to join us either as a bowler or just as a non-playing member or if you just want to come along & support the club in whatever way you see fit, you would be most welcome.

To find out more about membership contact the club secretary

Ben Allen on - 07778 225272

or email: birdbrookbowlsclub2024@gmail.com

From the Green Man with a touch of the Blarney.



Join us, behind the Community House, for the Birdbrook Bowls Club Open Day

on
Sunday 28th April
at 12 noon

with a free barbecue
& a chance to try
your hand
at the
ancient game of bowls.

cook734@btinternet.com



Formed in 1975, the Charity is an Educational Trust that administers funds from investments, in the form of grants to local young people.

Educational Grants Available

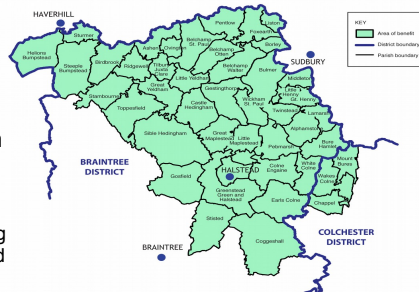
The Earls Colne and Halstead Educational Charity offers grants to individuals and voluntary groups and is keen to encourage applications to provide support for suitable projects that would benefit local young people.

Projects previously funded: the purchase of equipment such as mini nets for a tennis club, specialist equipment for those competing in sports or arts, first aid training, expeditions and guide/scout group events

To qualify, applicants must:

- be aged between 5 and 25 *
- have attended school or have lived for at least one year within the Charity's area of benefit (catchment area) *

* Voluntary groups must cater for young people in this age range and be located within our area of benefit



Find out more:

More information about the Charity and application forms can be found on our website – www.echec.org.uk . Alternatively call 07539 489477 or email earlscolnehalstead.edcharity@yahoo.co.uk

Birdbrook Defibrillators

The defibrillators at Birdbrook and Baythorne End are both checked regularly and are in good working order.

If someone is in cardiac arrest, call 999 and start CPR.

When you call 999, the operator can tell you if there's a public access defibrillator nearby. Anyone can use a defibrillator. You do not need training. Once you turn it on, there will be clear step-by-step voice instructions.



The defibrillator at the side of the road at Baythorne End

Stargazing from Birdbrook



M31 Andromeda galaxy. It is the nearest major galaxy to our Milky Way galaxy. The distance from us to it is about 2.5 million lightyears and it is believed to be about 152,000 lightyears across i.e. it would take light 152,000 years to travel from one edge of the galaxy to the other. It is in the constellation of Andromeda.

Martina McGovern

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Next edition:

News and adverts by 15 May for the June BPN
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