

Birdbrook Parish News



Jane Garman

Cambridge Festival

What is the Cambridge Festival?

The Cambridge Festival is a mixture of online, on-demand and in-person events covering all aspects of the world-leading research happening at Cambridge. Meet some of the researchers and thought-leaders working in some of the pioneering fields that will impact us all.
<https://www.festival.cam.ac.uk/>

Free talks, films, exhibitions, walks and family events.

19 March - 4 April 2025

Parish Council Meeting Dates 2025 7pm in the Community House

22 April 2025 APA/Community House AGM
13 May 2025 AGM
8 July 2025
16 September 2025
11 November 2025

VE Day & VJ Day 80th Anniversary 2025

Victory in Europe (VE Day), which takes place on 8 May, marks the Allied victory in Europe. The news resulted in millions celebrating the end of the war, with street parties, dancing and singing across the country.

The war in the Far East ended 15 August 1945 with VJ Day (Victory Over Japan).

Birdbrook PC is considering organising a commemoration.

Haverhill Town Council Events

For latest information visit:
<https://haverhill-tc.gov.uk/haverhill-town-council-2025-events/>

March 2025

Pamper Party

With thanks to Head to Toe Holistic the first fundraising event for 2025 at Birdbrook Community House will be the Pamper Party.

With a wide variety of treatments, products and gifts available to purchase this is one not to be missed. No pre booking necessary with treatments available on the night, from massage, to facials, tarot card reading and much, much more get the date in those diaries. The perfect night to treat those mums or purchase vouchers and products in preparation for Mothers Day. We can not wait to see you all on the night but if you have any questions or would like to donate towards the on the night raffle then please do not hesitate to email us:

Katie:

katie_owner@hotmail.com or

Coco:

headtoeholistic@yahoo.com



2024, coming to the end of our 4th Year has seen a few changes. One major change is a change of name. We were known as Stambourne Chapel Care and have now changed that to Chapel Community Care and come under the work of Ridgewell Community Chapel.

We continue to support around 60 people throughout the North Braintree Rural Community, between the towns of Haverhill, Braintree, Halstead and Sudbury.

Referrals

During 2024 we received 16 referrals. One did not want a service, 6 for befriending, 2 for emotional support and 3 for transport.

Volunteers

We now have 12 volunteers with 4 joining us this year. In total for 2024 we completed:

- 82 befriending visits
- 132 transport journeys
- 18 shopping trips
- 12 hospital visits
- 34 telephone befriending support
- 59 support visits.
- 45 dog walks

Fund Raising

We need donations and fundraising to fund what we do and if you would like to support us please get in touch to make a one off or regular donation.

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

St Augustine, Birdbrook

Table Manners

Raconteur is a marketing agency and publisher that creates digital campaigns for various well known brands, as well as smaller brands with big aspirations. Among the content and special reports they produce, one of their particular strengths is compiling lists with various unusual and unexpected themes.

In 2015, they asked several journalists, politicians, and authors to vote for whom they believed would be the ultimate dinner party guest. The results revealed a few surprising choices. Nearly two years before he first became president, Donald Trump received a vote or two, as did drug lord Pablo Escobar, outspoken feminist Germaine Greer, and outrageous comic Joan Rivers. The survey didn't explore what the conversation would have been like among those four, but it's fair to say it wouldn't have been dull.

The final six guests selected spanned the twentieth century and included both living and deceased individuals. It came as no surprise that Barack Obama received an invite. Author of the Harry Potter series J.K. Rowling would undoubtedly have plenty to discuss with Gandhi, and Marilyn Monroe could swap fashion tips with pop queen Beyoncé long after coffee and dessert were over.

The final guest was never one to hold back his opinions. Former Prime Minister Winston Churchill once remarked, "Dinner would have been splendid...if the wine had been as cold as the soup, the beef as rare as the service, and the brandy as old as the fish."

Among the stories Jesus told was one about a ruler who organized a great banquet to which many important dignitaries were invited. When the day of the feast arrived, none of them showed up, sending half-hearted apologies and feeble excuses for their absence. Consequently, the ruler sent his servants to invite the poor and destitute from the town, individuals who would typically never have the opportunity to attend such a lavish event.

St Augustine, Birdbrook Services:

- Sunday 9th March: 10:30am Morning Worship
- Sunday 23rd March: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion
- Sunday 13th April: 10:30am Morning Worship
- Friday 18th April 3.00pm: Good Friday Reflection
- Sunday 27th April: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion

vicar@2rivers.faith Church Warden: Judi Price 01440 73050

This serves as a picture of the life that Jesus invites us all to, highlighting the reality that many choose to turn down this invitation. We may not get to choose our fellow guests, but the feast at God's table is not something to miss!

Blessings,
Jonathan

Suffolk Libraries

A message from CEO Bruce Leake:

On Monday 24 February Suffolk County Council (SCC) announced to the media it planned to take the library service back from the independent charity Suffolk Libraries.

You may have already heard or read about this news or be aware of the online petition which has been independently set up to oppose this move.

This threatens not only the future of Suffolk Libraries but the future of YOUR library service. Suffolk Libraries has been hugely successful in creating and funding dozens of unique services designed to meet the needs of each Suffolk community.

We wanted our customers to have a clear and honest explanation as to what is happening.

Read more: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/suffolk-libraries-contract



Hello from your District Councillor

Essex Accepted into Government's Devolution Priority Programme (Devolution and LGR)

On 5 February 2025 BDC received the news that Essex has been accepted into the Government's Devolution Priority Programme. A request was submitted by Essex County Council, Southend-On-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council in January. Jim McMahon MP, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to Kevin Bentley, Leader of ECC on 5th February: *By agreeing to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme, you have agreed to seek to deliver devolution and reorganisation to the most ambitious timetable. I understand that the timing of elections affects your ability to plan for and proceed with these changes at speed and you have therefore requested for your local elections to be postponed from May 2025 to May 2026. While I do not take this decision lightly, I agree that this delay is necessary to facilitate both reorganisation and devolution to the most ambitious timetable. I know I can count on your support to see this through.*

The legislation will also postpone the changes to electoral divisions in recent boundary changes legislation for Essex County and Thurrock so they come into effect alongside the May 2026 election. This will ensure that any vacancies arising before May 2026 will be filled at by-elections on the current boundaries. You will receive your statutory invitation for local government reorganisation separately, alongside all councils in your area.

Local Government Reorganisation would see the abolition of all fifteen principal councils in Essex (including ECC and BDC) which would be replaced with a smaller number of unitary authorities. For us, current plans would indicate this would see a new Strategic Authority established in April 2026 and a mayoral election take place in May 2026. A consultation exercise on Devolution proposals for Essex will begin in the next few weeks. Very early conversations are taking place and the majority of Essex Leaders indicated a preference for five unitary authorities, but it's important to note that no decisions have been made and any changes would take place over several years.

Budget Plans and Council Tax

Essex County Council's 2025/26 budget plans have been approved by Full Council. This includes a Council Tax increase of 3.75% (a 1.75% general increase and 2% increase in the adult social care precept).

BDC has published their [2025/26 budget proposals](#) which shows they are able to balance their budget whilst protecting essential services and giving them a much-needed funding boost.

- No cuts to services
 - No increase in charges in things that are important to residents, like the garden waste subscription service and car parking
 - Support for community – community groups to support local initiatives, continued cost of living support, investment in sports and community facilities
 - £500,000 to address growing pressures around temporary housing accommodation
 - Investment in community assets and pride in place, with extra money for things such as litter and dog bins, A120 cleaning and a new rapid response team
- BDC are proposing to increase their share of council tax for 2025/26, a rise of around 2.97% or 11 pence per week based on a Band D property. To support low-income households, a council tax support scheme and hardship fund will be maintained for those most in need. Final decisions will be made at the next Full Council meeting scheduled 24th February 2025.

Crime Prevention Advice from Essex Police – Mobile Phones

Snatch thefts of mobile phones soared by 150% in London last year. Every phone



has an IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number. If your phone is stolen, you can use this ID to block it. To find your phone IMEI number key in *#06# and press dial and make note of it. You can also download 'find your phone' apps to find your phone and, more importantly, wipe the data stored on it.

Post Office – Steeple Bumpstead
The Post Office has written that following the resignation of the postmaster and the withdrawal of the premises for Post Office use, the above branch will be closing on Thursday 20 March 2025 at 12:30.

Scheduled Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders & Roadworks
Continued works with 3-way traffic control at junction of B1057 and A1017 to 28th March 2025 whilst Anglian Water undertakes mains replacement. <https://one.network/?tm=140902069>. Contact: E: steeple@anglianwater.co.uk or call 03457 145 145 quoting ref. number 61886011.

Intended closure of Sturmer Road and Hill Lane, Maltings Lane, The Endway (access only) 11th March 2025 9am-4pm whilst UK Power Networks undertakes pole replacement.

Intended closure of Sturmer Road, Rowley Hill, The Street, due commence 19th May 2025 for 6 nights (20:00-06:00) for inlay surfacing. <https://one.network/?tm=141938179>

Former Woodlands Hotel site in Sturmer to be replace with a Care Home

BDC's planning committee recently unanimously granted planning permission to re-develop land at the former Woodlands Hotel in Sturmer and replace it with a 64-bedroom care home.

The site was formerly used as a hotel but has been vacant since 2018. The building will be demolished to replace with a care home for dementia patients with shared spaces, including offices/meeting rooms, staff facilities and a small café. As part of the plans, improvements to the adjacent village green around landscaping and planting will also take place.

It will create 20 full time or equivalent employment opportunities, and whilst there would be an impact with the loss of 18 trees for this development, there is some confidence that the impacts of the proposal can be effectively mitigated by planting 53 new trees, 10 fruit trees and 410 whips in the village green.

Plans for new Heddingham Medical Centre a step closer

BDC has completed the process to transfer a plot of land located in Sible Heddingham to OneMedical Property, which means the construction of a new medical centre for the local community is one step closer. OneMedical Property is set to proceed with the development of the facility that will replace the three GP surgery sites currently run by the Heddingham Medical Centre. The practice currently cares for around 9,000 patients, and the new facility will accommodate 12,000, including extended operational hours and better use of new technologies to provide virtual consultations for patients unable to visit in person. When planning permission was granted to build homes on the old Premdor site, BDC secured the land as part of a Section 106 agreement for the development of a new medical centre. With the land deal now finalised, OneMedical Property will soon be entering the final stages of the construction tender process. Following the award of the contract, work will begin on preparing the site, with construction set to follow shortly thereafter

Response from Environment Agency concerning gap in fencing around Sturmer Gauging Station

EA Ref: GE39361. East Anglia Water, Land and Biodiversity Asset Management:-

Thank you for contacting us regarding concerns over the safety of the fencing at Sturmer Gauging Station. A public safety risk assessor has attended site and agreed that the gap in the fencing should be blocked to prevent the public from being tempted to access the weir at this location. We have planned works to remove two trees adjacent the gap which are causing damage to the weir wing wall. As part of these works, we will look to replant a hedgerow as a deterrent to the public.

We trust this response answers your enquiry. Should you require further information please contact us again at EAnWLBAssets@environment-agency.gov.uk

Government Launches Devolution Consultation for Greater Essex

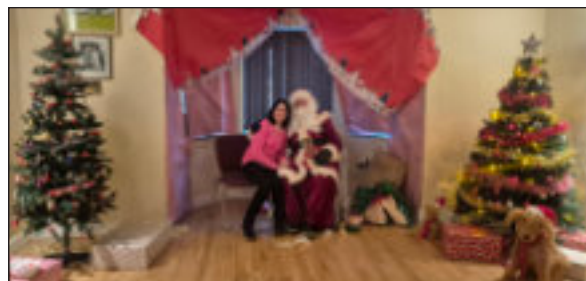
Residents are being encouraged to take part in the government's consultation on devolution that launched online this week. The consultation, run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) until 13 April, seeks your views on proposals to restructure local government in Greater Essex (Essex, Southend and Thurrock areas) and create a Mayoral Combined County Authority. This could bring more power and funding to the local area around housing and regeneration, local growth, adult skills (except apprenticeships) and transport.

The full consultation document can be found on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/greater-essex-devolution>

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV): Vaccination for Older Adults

The NHS is urging older people in the East of England who have not yet had the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine to get jabbed, as health service chiefs warn it is "not just a winter illness". RSV spreads all year round and affects the airways and lungs, and for older adults can lead to severe lung infections like pneumonia or other life-threatening conditions. RSV is also a leading cause of infant mortality, with nearly 150,000 women being vaccinated since September.

Invites will be sent this week to people who are aged 75-79, or turned 80 after 1 September 2024 and have not yet been vaccinated against RSV, encouraging them to book an appointment with their GP. Pregnant women are also eligible for the vaccine from 28 weeks onwards.



Thank you all for your support and attendance to this years Christmas Fair and Grotto the total raised was a fantastic £144.84

(Continued on back page)

Birdbrook Ladies Group



December

We held our Christmas meal at the Three Horseshoes in Helions Bumpstead for the second year running. Unfortunately a number of the group were unable to attend, but this did not stop us having a very enjoyable evening. The food and the service was faultless as was the company. We had fun doing the charades from the crackers and groaned at the time expired jokes. The evening was rounded off with our usual Secret Santa. A great array of

gifts, surprising what bargains can be bought for £5.00!!!

January

This month saw us planning for our forthcoming new programme. Many of the members came with lots of suggestions for interesting speakers. A number of varied talks were agreed on and several have already been confirmed. In the next few meetings we hope to



complete the programme.

February

Mandy, from our group, took us through the steps of making a Mood Board. Her skills are many and varied and she is always willing to share her knowledge and expertise with the group. First we passed around a number of items to encourage us to think about all our senses. Then, Mandy explained the evening was all about having fun and enjoyment and that there was no right or wrong way to make our mood boards. We scoured through an eclectic

mix of magazines to find pictures and quotes that inspired and interested us. Having chosen from a number of different shaped boards, our selected cuttings were then arranged, then rearranged until we were happy with the outcome and finally stuck down. Many of the boards were completed, but some of us, hopefully, will finish them at home. We had a wonderful selection of cakes and biscuits for our refreshments. The evening was a great success and there was much laughter, especially concerning some missing scissors!!

Sue King



Top left: Christmas meal at The Three Horseshoes

Above and below left: Making Mood Boards in February

Next meeting March 13th 2025
Amanda Sutherland from Haverhill
with a Styling Masterclass
Annual Membership: £25.00
New members and visitors are
always welcome.

Birdbrook Bowls Club

A happy, if somewhat belated, New Year from all at the Birdbrook Bowls Club,

to all of our readers; we trust you had a lovely Christmas and managed to meet Santa when he visited the Christmas Fair at the Community House.

Join us, behind the Community House, for the Birdbrook Bowls Club Open Day at 12 noon on Sunday 13th April 2025

borne fruit, because the playing surface is looking great, despite the unrelenting rain over the past few months. Hopefully it will be in excellent order for the start of the new season in May, when we will be playing in Division 2 of the SBBL. Our teams are looking forward to the challenges ahead and would welcome you support at home matches.

Watching 17 year old Luke Littler winning the world darts championship, or being enthralled by the indoor bowls from Potters where Beth Riva 17 and partner Jason Banks 28 won the world mixed pairs competition, shows you are never too young to take up a sport, traditionally played by us 'oldies'.

With this in mind, our first event of the new year will be a preseason open afternoon on Sunday, 13th April, from 12 Noon, when we will again be welcoming the Kedington Beaver Pack and their parents, to reintroduce them to game of lawn bowls. This time around things should be a little easier for the young bowlers, because we now have two sets of junior woods.

Thanks again to District Councillor, Diana Garrod for providing funding to buy the woods. Councillor Garrod will be joining us on the day and will open this, the inaugural event by bowling the first wood. Its sure to be a fun afternoon and you would be most welcome to join us for a barbecue and refreshments. All we need

is for the weather to be kind. As always, if you fancy trying your hand at the ancient game of lawn bowls, why not come along to any of our roll-up nights during the season and give it a go. Age is no barrier, membership is open to all and you will be made very welcome. Hope to see you soon.



Birdbrook Bowls Club in Action



Above and below: The Bowls Club on special days



Michael & Jack, new bowlers for 2024, valued members of BBC

To find out more contact the club secretary
 Sue King email: s_54king@hotmail.com

Increased Litter – Bumpstead Ward

Residents have complained that there is a very noticeable increase in litter in all villages in the Bumpstead Ward, but particularly along the A1017 between Sturmer and Ridgewell since the opening of McDonald's on the Suffolk/Essex border. In response, I asked questions at BDC:-

1. Can you please advise if any funding (such as S106) was obtained from this application to mitigate the impact of increased littering?
 2. What other action has BDC taken to reduce the impact of increased litter?
- The use of littering signage is ineffective.

BDC Response:

BDC wouldn't have received any funding, such as S106, as this doesn't fall within BDC's boundaries. Looking at the social policies that McDonalds have but what's unclear is how these are delivered through the different franchises. Therefore, BDC could look to make contact with McDonalds using the Street Scene Enforcement team, however, to do that they would need some evidence that the litter in the laybys are significantly from their store. With that, BDC could speak to them, but ultimately the responsibility sits with the public who are dropping litter. BDC will ask the streets team to monitor for any significance of litter from McDonalds. BDC will also look at the viability of putting bins in the laybys, but these are reliant on sufficient and appropriate space to put them and operational costs for emptying them. It could be reviewed again.

Government Announces: 100 New Towns Under Consideration

Proposals for new towns on more than 100 sites across England have been submitted as part of what the Prime Minister calls the '*largest housebuilding programme since the post-war era*.'

The final decision of which of the new sites will be selected will reportedly be revealed in summer.

The Prime Minister has also pledged to resolve regulatory disputes and to support housebuilders and councils to unlock around 700,000 new homes.

With best wishes to all,

Cllr. Diana Garrod

Braintree District Councillor for the Bumpstead Ward

John Weeks Obituary

John Weeks, who lived in Birdbrook for many years, died on December 9, 2024, at the age of 92.

John was a retired pharmacist who had worked in Haverhill for several decades.

He was much loved and will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

John was a valued member of the village and had been a trustee of the Community House where his contributions were greatly valued and appreciated.

John, together with his wife Joyce, was a regular visitor to the Warm hub at the Community House on Fridays, he will be greatly missed.

Missing Tortoise

Small (~6") Mediterranean tortoise missing on 21 Sept 2024, believed stolen as there was an attempted theft of a second tortoise. Very sad as had been part of the family for over 60 years. Be alert if you have tortoise(s).



Name & address supplied.

Sharps

If you use sharps at home you must put them in a sharps box and must **NOT** put them in the household waste. Some pharmacies are no longer able to take sharps for disposal. However, GB Holdings will come and collect sharps boxes from households on behalf of BDC if required: Tel: 01245 464214

Birdbrook Parish News

brought to you by Birdbrook Parish Council

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

The views expressed in Birdbrook News do not necessarily reflect those of the Parish Council.

Copy and images may be subject to copyright.

Acceptance of, and subsequent publication of any advertisement does not in any way constitute any endorsement by Birdbrook Parish News or Birdbrook Parish Council of the goods or services being offered.

Latest and previous editions of this newsletter:

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

Next edition:

News and adverts by 15 May for the June BPN

Editors Val and Katie: birdbrook2021@gmail.com