

# Birdbrook Parish News



## Super Blue Moon on 31st August 2023

seen from Birdbrook, photo by Martina McGovern

A Super Blue Moon is a very rare event, next one will be in 2037.

A common definition of a Blue Moon is, if a calendar month has two full moons, the second full moon is the Blue Moon. However if this then coincides with the moon being as close as possible to the earth, it is called a Super Moon hence this event was called a Super Blue Moon.

## Birdbrook Community Hub

The Birdbrook Community Hub is still open running now only Fridays 10am-12pm at Birdbrook Community House Pop along for tea and light refreshments with friendly neighbours and friends. Everyone welcome.

## Birdbrook Community Speedwatch Group

Firstly a big thank you to all of the new volunteers now part of the group.

A few recordings have been taken since the last time we wrote which is great and the presence of the group has had the desired effect with speed through Birdbrook seeming to have reduced during the recording times. A few loose ends to tie up with our current volunteer list so that everyone will have completed their online and practical training to participate with the group and we will very soon have a regular monitoring plan set up covering both Birdbrook and Baythorne End. If there is anyone else available who may be interested in volunteering for an hour a month please contact us via email.

[katiegentry@birdbrook.org.uk](mailto:katiegentry@birdbrook.org.uk)

## Birdbrook Bowls Club A view from the Green

Hello loyal & devoted readers, I hope you are all enjoying this year's topsy turvey weather. June lived up to its name, flaming, while July was a bit of a wash out. As I write this report I am in Bonnie Scotland enjoying some hot weather But enough of that, to our bowls season. Back in April we enjoyed another very successful Open Afternoon, welcoming several new bowlers who have proved over the season to be a great asset to our club. At the beginning of 2022 we only had seven bowlers. We are delighted to have now grown substantially & are able to field some strong teams in league & other fixtures: we reached the semi final of the division three cup, with another team reaching the semi final of the Buster Moore Challenge Cup. Our team reaching the semi final were Les, his wife Lynn & Eric himself. A superb result especially as Les & Lynn had not been able to bowl for much of the season. We must say a big thank you to Johnathan & Zoe for providing car parking facilities which kept many cars of our narrow roads. Our parking attendant Kieren did sterling work in marshalling the cars for which we were most grateful. *(There is no truth in the rumour that next season he will be providing piggy back rides for anyone who can't walk to the club.)*

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## It's time for a Macmillan Coffee Morning and you're invited

Let's do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer.

Place: Birdbrook Community House  
Date: 29th September 2023  
Time: 10am - 12pm  
Contact: Katie Gentry  
[katiegentry@birdbrook.org.uk](mailto:katiegentry@birdbrook.org.uk)

Simply scan this QR code with your phone to donate to your local's Coffee Morning. It's easy, quick and secure. Thank you.





## St Augustine's Church, Birdbrook



### Team Talk

At the time of writing, the England women's football team have just qualified for the knockout stages of the Women's World Cup, and we wait to see if they can replicate their magnificent performance when they won the Women's Euro 2022 final, or whether an unexpected underdog will triumph.

Played in Portugal over three weeks in the summer of 2004, the twelfth UEFA European Championship is widely considered to be a remarkable tournament. It featured the then-teenage Portuguese sensation Cristiano Ronaldo, French footballing hero Zinedine Zidane, and the home-grown English talents of Wayne Rooney and Steven Gerrard who all scored for their respective countries. None of them picked up a winner's medal that year, as not only did their sides fail to lift the cup, but the highly rated Germany, Spain and Italy were all knocked out in the group stage.

It was Greece, who began the tournament as 80-1 outsiders, who ended up triumphant, beating Portugal by a single goal.

Up until that point, Greece's impact on the worldwide footballing stage had been somewhat lacking. Although they had made it to the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, they failed to win a single game. They didn't even score a goal.

The problem seemed to be that Greek football was all about tribal enmity and the loyalty of supporters and players to the three largest clubs in the country, Olympiakos, Panathinaikos and AEK, at the expense of the national team.

### Forthcoming services at Birdbrook:

#### September 2023

Sun 10 Sept: 10:30am Morning Worship, Birdbrook  
Sun 24 Sept: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion

#### October 2023

Sun 8 Oct: 10:30am Morning Worship, Birdbrook  
Sun 22 Oct: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion

<https://www.stmaryschurch.org.uk/calendar>

On-line services are aimed at the whole family and are also available afterwards so you can watch in your own time:

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

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

If you need any help, spiritual or practical, or would just like to speak to someone, please contact us in the following ways:

Email: [contact@2rivers.faith](mailto:contact@2rivers.faith)

Telephone: 07359 330596 and leave a message.

Text: Send a text message to 07359 330596

*Please do regularly check the Two Rivers Facebook page or contact the Churchwarden as the information above may be subject to change.*

Under the leadership of a new manager, this all changed. The national team first became the top priority, and it wasn't long after making this the focus that results began to improve. The manager saw his team as a family and the players felt the same way. It made a huge difference.

In the first of his letters to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul explains how we are all needed to play our part in the Kingdom of God. Rather than a sports team or family, Paul uses the analogy of a body, where eyes ears and hands all have a distinct and valuable role. Every part is needed, every part is wanted. The body is strongest when all parts are working together and left weakened when one is missing.

We all have varied skills and talents, gifts and expertise. When working as a team, where there is both unity and diversity, we should celebrate difference. It is here that our weaknesses are held in others' strengths, and all under a God who made us as individuals to work together for his glory!

Blessings,

Jonathan

01440 731687 [vicar@2rivers.faith](mailto:vicar@2rivers.faith)

### Demand Responsive Transport (DaRT) minibus service

A public meeting was arranged with ECC transport offices in Ridgewell Village Hall at 6pm on Thursday 31st August. This is primarily about the DaRT minibus service but is an opportunity to raise questions about bus transport generally. Do feel free to invite people in your villages (though possibly not of interest to those in Gt Yeldham as they already have a bus service). General information:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/bus/community-transport/demand-responsive-transport-dart>

## Meet your Parish Councillors Anita and Tim Chadney

Tim & I have lived and worked in the Birdbrook Parish for over 20 Years. Tim is a local lad having grown up in Calford Green where he gained a passion for farming and the environment. Having finished school, he headed off to Agricultural College to pursue a career in farming.

Tim has had several job roles within farming before joining Unwin Estates as Farm manager 20 years ago. Tim has a great passion for the environment so felt that by joining the Parish Council he could offer a wealth of knowledge and experience to help where required.

Unlike Tim I'm not a local girl and was born and spent my formative years in Berkshire, however with my mother hailing from Sweden we then spent several years living there before moving to Suffolk.

I studied business at College and then joined Sainsbury as a trainee manager and spent the next 11 years moving between stores across the south of England. Once our two children arrived, I became a full-time mum until taking on the role as a Training Officer for a committee running a local Agricultural & land based training group. Our children attended the local primary school in Ridgewell where I joined the PTA and eventually became Chairman for several years. I wanted to help the school raise additional funds but also to run events such as school fetes and Christmas bazaars so that my and other people's children could experience the positive events that I did as a child. I am hoping that as a Parish Councillor I can bring my experience on the PTA & job roles to continue to successfully raise more funds toward the playground equipment for both Birdbrook and Baythorne End.

Tim & I are both very active people who enjoy cycling running and walking when ever we can. We also enjoy travelling and have a holiday home in France which we have had for over 20 years, many people who know Tim

realise how passionate he is about everything French and may have spotted him in his plum & custard 2CV. We hope that by joining the Parish council we can help the local community develop where required and look forward to meeting more of you in due course.



### Friends of Haverhill Library

**2024 calendar now available £7**

*Not only a superb A4 engagement calendar but helping to raise funds contributing to services to the community.*

Don't forget to send local 'Scenes in and around Haverhill' photo entries for 2025 by 30th April 2024 to: [fohcalendarcomp@gmail.com](mailto:fohcalendarcomp@gmail.com)



## 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](mailto: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*





## Hello From Your District Councillor

### Safety

Safer Essex have launched a new online safety map for people to use to highlight areas where they feel safe or unsafe in Essex. All of the data collected will be used by partners to inform their work going forward. You can widen the map, place a pin and you will be asked a few questions about why you feel safe/unsafe and what might help you feel safer. It will email confirmation.

<https://essexcommsafety.commonplace.is/en-GB/map/share-your-views-map>

### Housing

1,097 new homes were built in 2022-23. BDC passes government Housing Delivery Test, which is an annual measurement of housing delivery to assess the extent to which each local authority is building enough homes to meet their housing need, as determined by Central Government. This is a separate calculation to the national policy on five-year housing land supply, which includes housing backlog from previous years. Various

developments have been completed over the past year, including Harvard Place in Earls Colne, Toppesfield Road in Great Yeldham and a new retirement living accommodation at the former Bramston Sports Centre in Witham. BDC has secured Section 106 financial contributions through the planning process from the developers to support future play area and equipment, allotments and healthcare. 280 of the homes built during 2022-23 are affordable housing, meaning they will be available to either rent or purchase at more affordable levels to help people who cannot afford to purchase or rent homes on the open market. A target of an additional 250 affordable homes is expected to be complete by March 2024.

### Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley – Practical Conservation Volunteering

If you have time on your hands why not become a volunteer to help with a range of practical conservation tasks! All training and equipment is provided on the day. The tasks will take place on from September 2023 – February 2024 at various locations across the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley. For example: Saturday 7th October – Hazel Coppicing and Layering at Arger Fen Nature Reserve, Bures. Wednesday 3rd January – Hedgelaying. Work with local wildlife group to lay new hedge to create wildlife corridor at Steeple Bumpstead. All dates and details are available on their website. To book your place or to find out more information on any of the volunteering opportunities, please contact Nature Recovery Officer, Alex Moore da Luz at [alex.mooredaluz@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:alex.mooredaluz@suffolk.gov.uk) The Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Forum is taking place on Thursday 14th September at National Trust, Flatford. It is a FREE event with guest speakers on climate, landscape, farming and more. Plus optional dark skies walk.

### Garden Waste Subscription Service

BDC are introducing the new opt-in subscription service to collect garden waste. Collections will be every fortnight throughout the year apart from the week before and the week after Christmas. The subscription fee from 4 March up to and including 31 March 2025 (13 Months) is £55 however if you sign up by 30 November 2023 you can benefit from a 50% early bird discount, bringing the cost down to just £27.50 which equates to around £1 per collection in the first year. Additional bins are available for an extra charge.

### Composting – FREE online course

The course has five modules that you can select, from basics to in depth knowledge, including videos and quizzes. Each section lasts 10 to 20 minutes. You can just stick with the basics or go through everything if you wish - all at your own pace. You can come back to the course at any time, so it doesn't have to be completed at once.

<https://www.loveessex.org/>

### NHS launches new Digital Weight Programme

65% of adults in mid and south Essex have obesity or excess weight, which is higher than that of both East of England and England. To access the programme, participants must meet the following criteria: Age 18 or over and a BMI (Body Mass Index) greater than 30. The BMI threshold will be lowered to 27.5 for people from black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds, who are at an increased risk of conditions such as Type 2 diabetes at a lower BMI. It is easy for residents who meet the criteria to sign up, via this link <https://public.wmp.nhs.uk/?icb=QNC>

For further information, please contact [msepartnership.comms@nhs.net](mailto:msepartnership.comms@nhs.net)

### Councillor Community Grant – I am waiting for applications!

Each District Councillor has an allocation of £1250 per year to apportion to organisations running projects that benefit residents of their ward. Any 'not for profit' organisation can apply for a grant. These may include:

- Registered Charities
- Constituted 'not for profit' Community or Voluntary Groups
- Parochial Church Councils (anything that benefits the wider community)
- Social Enterprises e.g., Community Interest Company, Co-operative
- Village Hall and Recreation Ground Committees
- Town & Parish Councils (anything that is not an ordinary or existing activity/function or a statutory obligation or duty and benefits the wider community)
- Schools (anything that is not statutory/curriculum based and benefits the wider community)

There are many activities that can be funded with this grant. However, some restrictions do apply. The Guidance Booklet for this can be found at:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/homepage/83/councillors-community-grants-scheme-guidance>

With best wishes to all, Cllr. Diana Garrod  
District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward

## Birdbrook Bowls Club

*Continued from front page*

There were some familiar faces from the village who have expressed an interest in joining our club as either bowlers or as social members including our CSO, who can frequently be found enjoying a cuppie at the village Friday Hub. All will be extremely welcomed into Birdbrook Bowls Club. I have said on many occasions, it only takes but one step, thank to everyone who did just that.

This last competition was held at our club on Sunday 13th August in aid of The Cystic Fibrosis Trust:

### Buster Moore Charity match in aid of Cystic Fibrosis

On Sunday the 13th of August, Birdbrook Bowls Club played host to 20 bowls teams from across the county. Over 100 people came together to help raise money for Cystic Fibrosis, a charity close to our hearts as the nephew of our own club coach and chef, Ben Allen, suffers from this cruel illness.

Our sponsor for the day was Peasgood and Skeates who supplied a welcome bag for every player and provided banners and decorative boards for the green.

Cystic Fibrosis also supplied T shirts, table cloths and bunting for the day. Thanks also to Essex Gliding Club, Ridgewell for their trial lesson raffle prize. Some competitive and friendly games ensued with the ultimate worthy winners being the Cavendish A team, we offer them our warmest congratulations. A Birdbrook team reached the semi final which was a great result with two members of the team being new to the sport and unable to play for at least a year.

The local police also attended and provided great community support, some police hats for the children to wear for photographs, and let them sit in the police car for photos as well and we thank them for their kind gesture.

The weather was kind enabling everyone to sit outside and enjoy the spectacle. A superb lunch was also provided and of course the bar was open for refreshments.

A big thank you must go to all of the committee for planning and organising an event of this magnitude: it went like clockwork to fit everyone in for games and two lunch sittings.

So many members did what we have become so used to, and that is rolled up their sleeves and helped with every aspect of the day and we were able to showcase Birdbrook Bowls Club as a great venue and a friendly and welcoming club.

The Playing surface was excellent thanks to Leigh "the green" Carter and his team in the preparations made for the match.

Finally our own Yvonne Lawrence who is the Chairwoman of our club and President of the Steeple Bowls Club presented the Trophy to the winning team and thanked everyone for their support and donations for the charity. Yvonne commented 'I am extremely proud to have been able to put on this event and offer my heart felt thanks to everyone who helped to make it a truly special day for a wonderful cause'

*Report by Eric "Erratic" Stone*



*Photos from the Buster Moore Charity match in aid of Cystic Fibrosis by Albert Baxter*



To conclude on a very positive note. One third of our club only started bowling this season, one third last & one third have over five years experience. At least three have been bowling for over thirty five years each. So a club of mixed abilities but with enormous hearts.

At the end of the season we finished third in the Steeple Bumpstead league, just missing out on promotion. Everyone who participated & bowled for the club fixtures should be justly proud of themselves, thank you. Just wait & see what happens next season, the sleeping giant BBC will set the bowls greens alight.

Just come along on a Wednesday evening to our club nights where you will receive a very warm & friendly welcome.

One more thing to mention: We will

be starting indoor bowls at the end of the season for all, so look out for dates.

Our very best wishes to you all.

*Alan (The Captain) & Eric*





## Introducing Morgan's Butchery

The new face of Morgans Butchery. Since opening in 2019 it has been owned and run by founder, Matthew Morgan but at lot has changed at Morgans since then. As of April 2023 Miles Nicholas is now sole owner after joining Matthew Morgan back in 2022 as a business partner. Morgans Butchery can be found on the Baythorne Hall site along site Tarkas Café, Ben & Ellas Farm Shop, Baythorne Wines and many more beautiful, independent businesses.



Miles Nicholas grew up in Shelford, Cambridge after struggling with the structure of standard schooling he became an apprentice butcher at the age of 15, he continued to flourish in this career, finally becoming Butchery Manager at The Gogs Farm Shop at Shelford Bottom. There he trained many young apprentices and became president of the Cambridge & District Butchers' Guild. Miles supported the growth of the butchery there until 2018 when he suffered a life altering stroke.

Miles was left with multiple disabilities after his stroke and has had to learn to speak fully again. After months of physio and speech therapy from Addenbrookes Hospital, the unseen effects that his stroke caused took a toll on Miles and he decided that he wasn't able to return to his position. At this point it was clear that Miles had to rethink his future if he wanted to continue in the industry.

Miles had kept in touch with many of his ex-students who have moved around the country many of them opening their own butcheries, one of these being Matthew Morgan. After visiting Baythorne Hall and Morgans Butchery Miles felt it was the perfect environment for him to continue his career and Matthew Morgan was able to offer the right kind of support for Miles to flourish once again.

Now with the correct support team behind him, Miles grew and grew. His confidence behind the butchery block and behind the counter once again returned. Miles started up his butchery classes again, which are open to the general public to get a taste of what the world of butchery is all about, as well as butchering your own meat to take home and these have been a huge success.

Matthew Morgan decided in 2023 that he was leaving the business and now Miles has taken over the whole business and is running it with support from his family.

Morgans Butchery offers local, high welfare meat, much of which Miles will butcher in front of you, this means you have great traceability of where your meat has come from, and it can be cut to suit your needs, while

witnessing a true Master Butcher doing his craft. Miles' knowledge of the animals and butchery is second to none and you will learn something new on every visit, from steaks you've never even heard of but are far superior to the standard sirloin you see on the supermarket shelves to the handmade signature sausages.

The welcoming and friendly atmosphere at Baythorne Hall and Morgans Butchery make it an ideal place for those Sunday roast must haves, order in advance and just stop by and collect, or come and browse the counter, Miles will be able to help you every time. Miles continues to support the Stroke Unit at Addenbrookes Hospital where he was treated, regularly fundraising at the Morgans Butchery and outside at local WI meetings and much more. Miles happily talks about his experience and how he copes since suffering his stroke "we need to talk about these things, that's how people learn and understand", "the more we talk, the more we can support those who have to go through such life altering experiences and I hope people can see that you can continue to achieve things, like I have".

You can follow Morgans Butchery on social media for regular updates on what's going on at Baythorne Hall: on instagram @MorgansButchery or facebook/morgansbutchery. Or even better pop down and meet Miles and his family behind the counter at Morgans Butchery, Baythorne Hall, Baythorne End, Halstead, CO9 4AH.

*Amy Nicholas, Miles' daughter*

### The Plough

The Street, Birdbrook, CO9 4BJ  
Available for Hire for functions,  
Venues and Events  
Kitchen Facility, Bar, Bar Areas  
and Dining Area  
Please contact James Joy on  
07811 461409



still Bouncing and I'm still loving it, It's the only exercise class that I have stuck with - You get such a buzz after a class its fantastic and everyone who attends is supportive - We are all friends at Bounce Steeple Bumpstead - It's a very welcoming class...

My strength has improved as well as my stamina - And I encourage ANYBODY to come and give it a go! - It's also helped me shift a stone in weight too which can't be bad! All Equipment is provided - All you need is a pair of trainers, (A sports bra - ladies!), a towel and bring some water.

I attend up to 3 sessions a week. I'm there on Sunday mornings for 'Bounce' & 'Bounce Balance', which is a Pilates/Yoga style class - offering a good stretch! (And my favourite!) and then on alternate Sundays there is 'Bounce Beats' which is with weighted pink drumsticks. Beats is a percussion-based workout to add extra focus to the arms!! and on Tuesday evenings for 'Bounce Barbells' which is using weights for more of a toning class.

Bounce is an exercise class which is open to all ages and abilities - If you feel you can't do a certain move you just take the bounce bit away, until you get more confident. It's also child friendly! Lots of Mums bring little ones along who can use a trampoline if there is a spare, or just snuggle up with a toy, or tablet etc whilst Mum's get their sessions done. Now the

## Zanna Newton PILATES



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

Classes are live on Zoom and also in Ridgewell, on Mondays and Thursdays, am and pm.

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

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

## Come to Bounce Steeple Bumpstead!!

It was about 3ish years ago I was scrolling through Facebook and came across an Ad on a local selling page advertising a new fitness class called ((Bounce)) A rebounding exercise class on low individual trampolines - Would there be an interest in Steeple Bumpstead? And if so when would people like to attend? I'd seen adverts for the sessions online and it looked fun ... So, I booked my first session on a Sunday Morning, which was then at Steeple Bumpstead Primary School.

My first session that morning I was all over the place! My coordination was questionable, and I was convinced I'd fall off the trampoline, but I had such a giggle! The music was brilliant, there was a real party atmosphere with disco lights and our Instructor Kirsty shouting out encouragement in between instructions to the routines - I booked more sessions, and week on week my fitness level improved, my coordination was OK and the fear of falling vanished! I was hooked - I averaged a Sunday morning session and then a Thursday evening session.

Then Covid hit, and our bounce 'parties' had to stop while we went into lockdown - which was frustrating - I did a few 'Bounce@Home' sessions after buying my own trampoline, but it wasn't the same as the class atmosphere! It was great to back to class once restrictions were lifted!

So here I am, aged 50! and I'm

**Tuesday 6:30pm-7:15pm Barbells**  
**Thursday 6:30pm-7:30pm ((BOUNCE))**  
**Sunday 9am-10am ((BOUNCE))**  
**Sunday 10:15am-11am Balance/Beats**  
**Alternate weeks**

sessions are based at Steeple Bumpstead Village Hall the park area outside is ideal for children who want to play whilst the classes are on. Its not just for Women either, there are a few Men who come along with their partners and enjoy it! Everyone is very welcome!

For more information check out ([bouncefitbody.com](http://bouncefitbody.com)) As well as the Bounce Steeple Bumpstead Facebook and Instagram pages (See Ad) - see you there!

To book a class: [bookwhen.com/bouncesteeplebumpstead](http://bookwhen.com/bouncesteeplebumpstead)  
More information: email: [steeplebumpsteadbounce@hotmail.com](mailto:steeplebumpsteadbounce@hotmail.com)

or call 07850 599795.

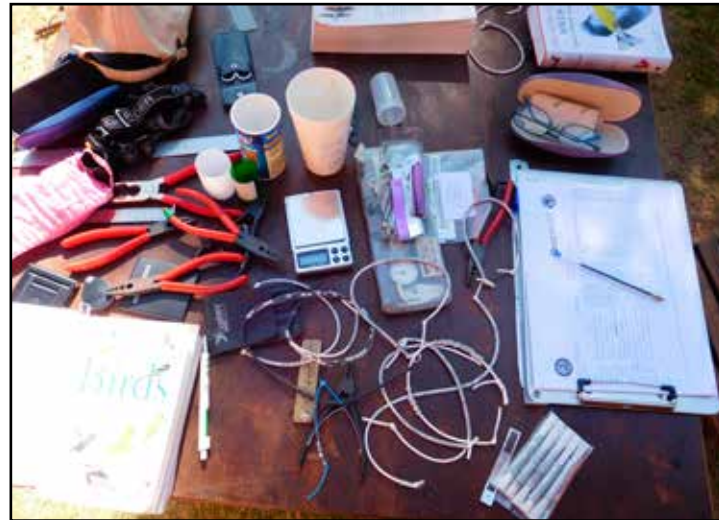
*Kylie Hilson*



## From our Bird Ringing Expert in Birdbrook Barry Williams

Our knowledge of birds has come a long way since “learned men” proclaimed that Swallows hibernated in the bottom of ponds during the winter months or that Barnacle geese did in fact emerge from barnacles! These laughable concepts were still believed by some until the 18th century but thankfully there were enough intelligent people around who didn’t accept these crazy ideas and started to attach coloured threads or metal bands to birds to see if they could find out where they really did go when they disappeared as the season changed. The marking of individual wild birds seems to start in the middle ages although pigeons and falcons were being marked by their owners probably back to Roman times and possibly even earlier.

A more scientific approach to the study of bird migration started in the 19th century and by the early 20th century there were enough individual bird ringing projects in the UK to warrant the creation of a nationwide scheme under the control of the British Trust for Ornithology. The BTO was formed in 1909 and the The Ringing Scheme as we know it today was set up in 1937. About 50,000,000 birds have been ringed in the UK since then and currently about 800,000 birds get ringed each year. The conventional metal ring that gets fitted to a birds leg is obviously hard to read in the field and it was not long before ringers started using plastic coloured rings that could be read at distance. First used on ducks, geese and wading birds, coloured rings are now used on most species of birds and have markedly increased the chance of a ringed bird being seen again. Another way we can mark birds is with wing tags. Commonly used on birds of prey an individual coloured/coded plastic tag is fitted to the birds wing with a small plastic or metal pin. This enables the bird to be read from below when it is soaring.



*Above: A typical Ringing table with rings, wing rulers, scales and various pots to weigh the birds.*

*Bottom left: Barry in the act of actually closing the ring on a Black-faced Spoonbill.*

Modern developments in radio, computer and communication technology have also increased the options for ringers and it is now possible to attach small tracking devices to even the smallest bird. Unfortunately, at the moment the price of the transmitters, coupled with the cost of satellite time to actually track the bird, limits the amount of birds that can get tagged in this way but hopefully as the costs go down, more and more birds can be fitted with tracking devices. There is a worrying development to this radio tracking however. The Iranian government have accused the Israelis of espionage as they have brought down vultures fitted with trackers by Israeli ringers! How do you train a vulture to spy?

So why do we ring birds? There is no doubt that wildlife throughout the world is under pressure with habitat



loss, global warming and modern farming methods just some of the reasons. The more we understand a bird’s movements and habits, the more likely we may be able to make some adjustments to the way we do things. Apart from migratory movements, we can predict survival rates especially of young birds ringed as nestlings. Data collected by ringers can be used by scientists and planners to protect habitats that would be affected by building developments, roads, wind-farms etc and hopefully that data may just convince a planner to put a road in a different place or not drain that marsh for that new housing estate. If the birds that I have caught in nearly 50 years of ringing can help to make this place better for wildlife (and us) then I think it’s all worth it.



*Wing-tag on a red kite.*

I started ringing in the mid-1960’s when I was still at school. I had seen Peter Scott on TV, cannon-netting geese in Iceland and said to myself “I must learn to do that one day”! Fortunately one of my pals at school had an uncle who went bird ringing and after much persuasion he agreed to take me along to a ringing session with his uncle, Roy Thatcher. I was instantly hooked and for a couple of years I went through the long process of training to become a qualified bird ringer. This came to an abrupt halt in late 1968 when Roy’s work took him to Germany and although I continued to bird watch I was not ringing. In early 1974 I got married but the day after I returned from my honeymoon I met up again with Roy and decided that this time I would complete my training and become a fully qualified bird ringer. Training to become a qualified ringer can take several years; putting a ring on a bird is the easy bit but extracting the bird from a mist net safely, learning to be able to determine the age and sex of a bird and understand how birds moult can take a long time. Another 3-4 years passed and it was a very proud day when my “A” ringing licence arrived in the post; probably about the same time as my divorce papers!.

Now I could ring on my own but living in a flat in Enfield meant that most of my ringing was limited to Roy Thatchers’ garden in Hertfordshire and Rye Meads sewage farm. There was (and still is) a very active ringing group (RMRG) based at

the site and many a happy weekend was spent wallowing around in sludge, catching ducks, swans, and Moorhens plus many migrant warblers that fed on the multitude of insects that were attracted by the stink!! It was through the Rye Meads group that I got introduced to the Basildon Ringing Group (BRG) and gull ringing and cannon-netting. Gulls are not everyone’s favourite bird but during the winter months the UK becomes home to hundreds of thousands of gulls from as far afield as arctic Russia and thousands were attracted to the land-fill site next door to the BRG’s main ringing area at Pitsea. And so it was that from the early 1980s until quite recently I would spend many days during the winter months surrounded by piles of rotting food, discarded nappies and old mattresses waiting for the huge flock of gulls to settle so we could fire our net over the feeding gulls. Some days the birds never settled or there were no food trucks but when we did catch, it could be fantastic with this huge mass of squawking (and biting) gulls underneath the net and a team of ringers all scrambling around in amongst the rubbish pulling the birds out from beneath the net. I think our best daily catch was over 700 and I still regard it as some of the best ringing I’ve ever experienced.

It was around the same time (early 1980s) that I met a chap who wanted to become a ringer. He was a professional footballer who hailed from Scotland. We became close pals (even though he played for Arsenal) and over the next few years we had some great times ringing all sorts of birds, all over the British Isles. We ringed nestling Buzzards, Ravens and Peregrines in Wales, Long-eared owls, Curlew, Lapwing Oystercatchers, Snipe and Redshank in Scotland and Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers in Durham. We also had some hilarious moments; being dangled down a cliff on the end of a rope to get to a Raven’s nest being just one of them.

Experiencing all these different species really gave me a desire to travel further afield and when one of the lads from the Basildon group asked if I wanted to join him on a trip to Spain my international bird ringing adventure really began. ....to be continued!

### Looking after Grandchildren - Fill National Insurance Gaps!

Nearly two thirds of grandparents will be on childcare duty this summer and some will spend some 250 hours, which is equivalent to a full-time job. They could claim valuable National Insurance Credits, possibly benefitting particularly women, and backdated to 2011, towards the state pension, which could give them thousands in state pension payments later in life.

**The criteria:** A person needs to be younger than state pension age (66 at present); Child/Children need to be under age 12 looked after on a regular basis, parents have to be working whilst the person is looking after their children.

Details at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-specified-adult-childcare-credits>



## Birdbrook Ladies Group

### May

There was a good attendance from members for our AGM, not noted for being the most scintillating meeting of the year. Sue King and Hilary Hoye were elected again as Chair and Treasurer respectively. Alison Gilbert stood down as Secretary and it was agreed that several members would cover the post. After all the necessary business was concluded, there was a lot of hilarity and head scratching over some of the quizzes provided.

### June

Tammy Blest, from the Community Police, delivered a talk to the group regarding phone and on-line scams. This was open to non-members but sadly only two husbands attended. The talk was informative and made the members aware of some scams they may not have heard about. It made us realise how easy it can be to be scammed and how we all need to be more vigilant. Tammy handed out some freebies, a RFID card holder and a set of bells to attach to a purse.

### July

This month saw the Birdbrook Ladies Group travel out of the village to Finchingfield Lavender Farm. What a wonderful find! The weather was kind to us and Julia the owner gave us the history of how she set up the farm and campsite. We were able to wander through the lavender rows and peek inside the glamping tent. Each pitch has its own shower and compostable loo. The tearoom was a little gem, providing delicious cakes and scone. We all agreed we would definitely visit again and a lovely place to take friends and family.

### August

Finally, the sun decided to put in an appearance, and we had the most perfect evening for Sue's Summer Soirée. Most of the members were able to attend, and some with their partners. The table groaned under the weight of all the food contributed by everyone. The desserts as usual were delicious, something for everyone's palate. There was lots of laughter, good conversation and one or two drinks taken. An excellent raffle was held, people had generously donated prizes and then bought lots of tickets. A donation from our proceeds will be made to a charity. As it got dark and the garden lights came on, people started to leave but a few stalwarts remained, putting the world to rights. All in all a very successful evening.

## Bags2School Collection

Back in May we took part in our first Bags2school collection. A big thank you to each and everyone of you who donated your unused items towards this, the May collection raised **£40.00** with all funds raised going straight back into our Parish and community. Since the last collection lots of you have asked if we will be doing this again and the answer is yes. The next collection date and details are give (see right) with more bags available if needed from the community house. If you would like to arrange to drop off your items the night before or have any questions please contact me: [katiegentry@birdbrook.org.uk](mailto:katiegentry@birdbrook.org.uk)



### Programme of Events 2023 - 2024

7.30pm at Birdbrook Community House.

- **Sept 14th** - Head to Toe Holistics with Coco
- **October 12th** - Wild Swimming: Mandy Wilson
- **November 9th** - Christmas Crafts
- **December 7th** - Christmas Meal
- **Jan 11th** - Social Evening
- **February 8th** - Quiz Evening: Martin Gilbert
- **March 14th** - Journey Down The Stour: Mervyn Linford
- **April 11th** - to be announced
- **May 9th** - AGM

Visitors are most welcome. Annual Membership: £25.00



**BAG 2 SCHOOL**  
FREE FUNDRAISING FOR SCHOOLS  
In partnership with your school or organisation

Birdbrook Parish Council



Bag 2 School is a company that specialises in the reuse and recycling of good quality second-hand clothing and we have arranged to make a collection from your school. All the bags will be weighed and you will be paid for the total weight collected. Remember, the more you collect the greater the benefit to your school.



PLEASE USE YOUR OWN BAGS (THERE IS NO LIMIT).

When the clothes have been removed from the bag the plastic will be packed and sent for recycling.

We are collecting good quality items for RE-USE:  
Men's, ladies' & children's clothing, paired shoes, handbags, belts & accessories.  
(No uniforms, workwear, pillows, duvets or pieces of fabric please)

The more we weigh the more we pay!  
Extra bags are welcome - there's no limit

Please return your Bag2School on:

Thursday 28th September 2023

01609 780 222 | www.bag2school.com | helpdesk@bag2school.com

## My Owl family update 2023 Jane Garnham

You may recall the story of the Owl family in last September's BPN in which we followed an Owl family from first putting up a box until the two Owlets fledged. Since then the trail cam has triggered on multiple occasions with the adult pair looking very cosy at the shelter/box until 18th February this year. From that point there was only one adult seen, which appeared to be the male. What happened to his mate is a mystery – but with adult birds, the peak in mortality is during the late

winter/early spring period when small mammal numbers and winter temperatures are at their lowest.



As the weeks went by with only the male, we joked about putting an advert on a dating site for him - own home close to good local restaurants, proven father! Then on 7th April the camera recorded two adults at the box, pair bonding. The new female showed a great attachment to the box, returning quickly and staying very close by if disturbed. On 4th May there were no eggs in the box when checked with a pole mounted camera (last year the first egg was seen on 27th April) however the pair remained very invested in the box especially the female. On the 7th July the box was rechecked and found to contain four chicks and one unhatched egg - yay! The chicks looked to be between 1 and 5 days old, so laid approx. 1 month later than last year.

Inspection and ringing took place on 9th August and we have three healthy owlets thought to be 2 girls and 1 boy with estimate ages (from feather measurement) of 36, 37 and 30 days. Which means that the youngest chick must have come from the unhatched egg seen in nest. So from what seemed a unhappy start of the year, things are looking much more promising. We hope to be able to see more of the Owlets as they explore the box shelf and maybe even some photographs as they venture to nearby trees.



Left: 9/8/23 An evening ringing the three owlets, thought to be two females and one male, slightly development stages, so hatched sequentially. Whether the youngest, and therefore smallest that hatch survive depends on food supply.



Above: New female 18/4/23  
Below left: New female at box 7/4/23  
Below: 4 chicks 7/7/23





## The Kings Coronation

Wow, how fantastic our Parish is. Our community pulled together once again for a historic occasion not to be missed.

The events started down at Colne Valley Arms in the morning with lots of fun and laughter, the children loved the bouncy castle, and much needed cakes and breakfast were served. The British weather did not dampen the spirits of our visitors and parishioners as ice creams were had by many before watching The Kings Coronation. A big thank you to Siobhan and her team for taking part and putting on such a lovely morning for the children.

A Birdbrook first with the Police supporting with our annual wheelbarrow race, new champions were crowned and lots of happy faces emerged with a fantastic amount of effort put in to decorating their wheelbarrows in the royal theme. Palaces decorated the Parish as well with the Birdbrook Corgi earning his crown. Cakes, colouring, crown making and crafts with a quiz which even had our local officers getting involved. Lots of learning for our very excited younger visitors with the opportunity to ask the welcoming police lots of questions and see inside their riot van, shields, flashing lights. A big thank you to Essex Police for participating and visiting us on the historic day.

We are very lucky to have such a range of local small businesses contributing to events and thank Andy Murlis for his fantastic

food as well as the Birdbrook Bowls Club and Community House for their fantastic welcome to the events.

The events culminated with the lighting of our Beacon and a goodbye to our fantastic Parish Councillor Martin Gilbert. Thanking him for his years of service to our parish including his participation in both the organising and running of the Queens Platinum Jubilee and The Kings Coronation events. The work and effort he has put in with fundraising for our parish playgrounds will live on despite him stepping down and we give thanks to him for such efforts.

The beacon again brought our community gathering around the green, a truly heart-warming moment where we all again stood

shoulder to shoulder with our friends, family and neighbours to celebrate the kings coronation. Chatting, laughing, and creating memories to last a lifetime. Thank you all for attending and hope you enjoyed the events as much as we did.

Katie Gentry & team



## Essex Mobile Library

visits Birdbrook Church  
every 3 weeks Thursdays 2.55 ~ 3.25pm  
Next visit dates for 2023:  
14-Sep, 05-Oct, 26-Oct,  
16-Nov, 07-Dec, 28-Dec

You don't need to visit the library to read books. Both Essex and Suffolk libraries have online E-reading services, visit their websites for details.

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**News and adverts by 15 November for the December BPN**

Editors Val and Katie: [birdbrook2021@gmail.com](mailto:birdbrook2021@gmail.com)

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**CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR**

**9TH DECEMBER, 2023**  
11AM UNTIL 3PM

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KATIEGENTRY@BIRDBROOK.ORG.UK