



PARISH UPDATE



Braintree District Council's Town and Parish Council Newsletter

December 09



December 2009

Dear Members

As usual at this time of year, we're all wondering where the days, weeks and months have gone. However, we have New Year approaching fast with new challenges and much hard work to continue with.

Please take the time to read through the articles in this newsletter, many of which will update you on our services where we are already working together for the benefit of our communities.









In the centre pages we've highlighted four of our District's Parish Clerks who generously volunteered to be 'quizzed' on why they do it!

Finally we would like to wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Thank you, Editor

This Newsletter is also available to read on our website - www.braintree.gov.uk through Council and Democracy - Parish Information Pages.

Items included in this issue:

-  Book now for next year's Children's Activity Day in your parish. (Page 2)
-  Christmas tree recycling – where and when. (Back page)
-  How much do you know about the Braintree Local Strategic Partnership and what it does? (Page 4)
-  Meet four of our District's hard working Parish Clerks and find out why they do it! (Pages 6 and 7)
-  Community Development – What is it and who does it? (Page 5)
-  What do you know about Braintree Community Transport Schemes and how they're being used in your Parish? (Page 8 and 9)
-  Village Agents – will you be spreading the word? (Page 11)
-  Winter flooding – is your parish council up-to-date on recent changes? (Page 3)

And more inside!

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Coming Soon

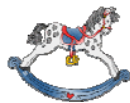
Braintree District Museum - Christmas Opening



Come along to Braintree District Museum for your Christmas gifts! Choose from local crafts, fair-trade goods and a wide selection of children's toys ideal for Christmas stockings!

Why not take the opportunity during the Christmas Holidays to visit our Exhibition 'Perfect Pets' and find out about the animals we have shared our lives with throughout the centuries. Bring along a drawing or photo of your pet for our 'Pet Show' and may be win a prize!

The Museum is open from 10am to 5pm Monday to Saturday. Closed 24th – 28th December inclusive and on New Year's Day. For more information please contact the Visitor Services Team on 01376 325266.



Children's Activity Days

The Leisure Development Team is once again planning their popular Summer Activity Day programme for 2010 in partnership with Parish Councils. The Team provide experienced staff and all the materials while parishes provide a venue, usually a village or community hall, for local children to enjoy a fun packed day.

Last year approximately 1,000 children attended to take part in team games, multi-sports, arts and crafts. Activities suitable for 5 – 11 year olds and places are limited so booking is essential.



Cllr Lady Patricia Newton joining in with the children on one of the 2009 Activity Days

The Activity Day costs £5.00 per child per day and all bookings and payments are taken in advance by the Councils Customer Service Team on 01376 552525.

We will be writing to all Parish Councils before the end of the year to organise the dates for next summer. So if you'd like to take part please return your form as soon as possible as places are allocated on a first come, first served basis and many Parish Councils were disappointed to miss out last year.

For more information contact Kryshia Fuller 01376 552525 or email activitydays@braintree.gov.uk





IMPORTANT - Emergency Planning Service - Thoughts on Flooding

If you are aware that your parish or some or your residents are susceptible to flooding, we would encourage your Parish Council to promote the Environment Agency Flood Information Guidelines:

- Preparing for a flood
- During a flood
- After a flood

All of the above are available to download from the Environment Agency website:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/.

You may also wish to consider signing up to the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct, details of which are on their website. Additional information on flood prevention is available on the Emergency Planning pages of the BDC website: www.braintree.gov.uk and also from the National Flood Forum, www.floodforum.org.uk

Braintree District Council held a parish flood awareness evening in September to raise awareness across the District on flooding issues, commercial flood products and community resilience.

Many of the parish representatives attending the evening expressed an interest in using new products to protect their properties and wished to promote these products to their parishioners.

Parish representatives were also interested in purchasing supplies of a sandbag substitute now available from Floodsax®. These lightweight sacks are

ready to use within minutes as they are activated by being placed in water: once expanded they are placed in layers to build a barrier outside the affected property.

Further information on Floodsax® can be found on the following web page:

www.edslimited.co.uk/Products/FloodSax

A letter was sent to all Parish Clerks on 10th November 2009, regarding purchasing Floodsax at a reduced cost via BDC. If you have not already done so, please return the Floodsax request sheet if your parishioners would like to purchase either Floodsax or DoorPac's.

If you are interested in alternative flood defence products please view the "Blue Pages Directory" under "Flood Resilience" on the National Flood Forum website:

<http://www.floodforum.org.uk/>

BDC is no longer going to give a supply of traditional sandbags to parish councils but as highlighted above has arranged to purchase a supply of Floodsax®. and DoorPac's for parish councils and individual householders to buy from the Council at wholesale rates.

We welcome two new Parish Clerks to the Braintree District – Michael Barry at Coggeshall and Linda Hadley at Gosfield. Pippa Potter has taken on Pebmarsh in addition to Rayne.

(Please notify the District Council if your Parish Clerk's details change.)



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Braintree Local Strategic Partnership

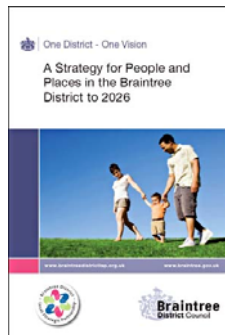


We are a group of partners from Braintree District Council, Essex Police, Essex County Council, NHS Mid Essex, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and many other public, private, community and voluntary organisations who are working together to improve the quality of life for the people who live and work in the district, now and for generations to come.

Our work is driven by the Braintree District Sustainable Community Strategy which has been developed jointly by the LSP and Braintree District Council and was approved in June 2009.

It sets out the social, economic and environmental priorities for people and communities in the District from now to 2026 – these are called the Community Priorities which fall under four themes:

- Promoting accessibility for all
- Creating a clean and green environment and addressing climate change
- Achieving a prosperous local economy
- Enabling everyone in the District to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle.



To help us achieve these priorities we are delivering key projects and activities across the District.

You can find out more about us, the work we are doing and the difference it is making by visiting our website www.braintreedistrictlsp.org.uk or by contacting:

Jo Petchey
Partnerships and Performance Manager
jo.petchey@braintree.gov.uk or 01376 551414 x.2366

Parish Liaison Service Review Results

Many thanks to all of you who returned the questionnaire sent out to you in July. A report has been prepared and is available to read on the Parish Information Pages of www.braintree.gov.uk

Taking into account the higher scores achieved this year for contacting the service and for how good our general support is considered, it shows a continued improvement.

The results show that most of the parish and town councils believe the service provided is excellent and extremely useful.

Thank you once again for your support.



Parish Liaison Officer



Community Development

Community Development is a skilled and planned way of working that helps people to work together to achieve improvements in the area where they live. It is about people, individuals and/or groups, coming together to create their own sense of belonging and making real differences to bringing back the meaning of 'community spirit' through personal and joint contributions.

Braintree District Council Community Development is a team of experienced Community Development Officers forming part of the Community Safety & Development Team. These Officers are dedicated to work with residents to improve their own circumstances and give them the tools to build better relationships.

Why do we have a Community Development Team? Often in communities, there are people who are passionate about what happens and what they want to happen in their area. Many people are already actively involved in their community, but may need a little help. We help to bring partners and communities closer together to enable them to deliver identified projects and events. We want to ensure that communities become more capable of controlling their own circumstances and that the community and community sector is better aware of their beneficial role in society.

What do we do & how do we do it? We work with and support communities and assist voluntary and statutory partners to:

- Facilitate the building and strengthening of communities
- Help to bring communities together for all round benefit
- Work with individuals and groups
- Give advice information and support
- Provide resources, tools and knowledge
- Link groups with sources of specialist support
- Help local communities to identify their priorities and needs
- Provide project support from start to finish
- Help communities achieve their aims
- Promote community leadership
- Encourage and help people to become more actively involved in community life

Who do we work with? In short, **ANYONE!** We work with social, economic and environmental initiatives so are well placed to work with anyone.

Is there anything we cannot do? The Team covers a vast District and so we are unable to run projects or events for you. However, we will work alongside you wherever possible to assist in turning your plans into life, and then work with you as a link.



Want to know more? Contact us on 01376 551414, or Email: communitydevelopment@braintree.gov.uk

Parish Clerks – Why do they do it? This was one of the questions I've been asking our district's clerks. It can be a lonely role but also a very rewarding one, undertaken by men and women from varied backgrounds and for different reasons. If you haven't already, I'd like you to meet four interesting and knowledgeable people to find out why they do it!

Cathy Carlisle, Clerk to Great Saling and Shalford Parish Councils for the last 4 years, is a mum with two young boys – not only does she work for two parish councils Cathy is also a farm secretary and helps at a local pre-school.

Why did you become a Parish Clerk?

“My mum has been a parish clerk for many years and it seemed a good opportunity to keep my brain active and earn some extra money doing something I already knew a little about, and of course I could always ask mum for advice!”

What are the ‘best bits’ of the job?

“Completing projects and trawling back through records so that I can go back to my Council with the answer to their questions.”

What are the ‘worst bits’?

“Although I've enjoyed taking on the CiLCA training, it's not easy to find the time to compile my portfolio!”



Kenn Butcher, Clerk to Cressing Parish Council for two years and previously for four years in a neighbouring district. When I interviewed Kenn he was using a ‘wooden bench’ as an office seat – “it's waiting to be installed in a bus shelter – might as well make use of it whilst it's taking up space in the office” – having a practical, no-nonsense approach to clerking is a good attribute to have!

Why did you become a Parish Clerk?

“My local council were having one or two problems and I wanted to help.”

What are the ‘best bits’ of the job?

“Making a difference! Being stopped in the street, listening and solving the problem.”

What are the ‘worst bits’?

“Disappointing members of the public, when you can't solve the problem.”





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Lisa Miller, Clerk to Hatfield Peverel Parish Council for less than a year and took over from one of the district's longest serving clerks – she has two young children. Lisa's previous experience of managing a team has made the new job much easier for her.

Why did you become a Parish Clerk?

"I wanted to keep my brain active and it gets me out of the house."

What are the 'best bits' of the job?

"No day is the same – it's interesting work and I'm using my brain."

What are the 'worst bits'?

"I'll let you know when I've been doing it for a bit longer!"



Adrian Corder-Birch, Clerk to two Parish Councils – Little Yeldham, Tilbury Juxta Clare and Ovington, and Sible Hedingham and is the longest serving Parish Clerk in the District. Now here's a clerk who really must love his work! Adrian is often called upon by other clerks for help and advice and he's always been a keen supporter of our District's Clerks Network meetings.

Why did you become a Parish Clerk?

"My late father was a parish councillor at Little Yeldham and I'd taken an interest – when a vacancy for a clerk came up, I applied."

What are the 'best bits' of the job?

"The work is varied and often challenging and I enjoy helping other members of the profession to solve their problems."

What are the 'worst bits'?

"I'm happy with preparing for meetings but minutes are laborious – so I would have to say it's writing up the minutes!"



Many thanks to all the clerks who volunteered to be questioned by me and especially to those who allowed me to take their photograph – very brave of you!

Parish Liaison Officer



Does your Parish Council know about Braintree Community Transport?

Braintree Community Transport is a working partnership with Essex County Council.

We offer three transport services for residents (who meet set criteria) and live in the Braintree District.

Minibus Scheme - Six, 12 seater and one 7 seater, fully accessible minibuses which are kept at the Leisure Centre, Panfield Lane, Braintree – they are for use by any non-profit making group in the district. A registration fee of £15 per year and the group pays for mileage at 85p per mile. Groups can use our bank of MiDas (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) trained volunteer drivers or we will train, at no charge, a driver nominated by the Group to drive on their behalf.

Used by groups for day trips, lunch clubs, social trips, day centre transport etc the service is dependent on a driver being available. Mostly volunteers but we do employ two drivers. The service operates at all times including evening and weekends. Buses are hired out on a first-come first served basis. Regular weekly, bi-weekly or monthly trips can be arranged.

The reception for key hand over is open seven days a week and late evenings. Also, the majority of our volunteer drivers live in Braintree so collection of the bus for them is easier.

Social Car Scheme - Coordinated by Braintree Community Transport and operated by volunteer drivers using their own vehicles, who receive out of pocket expenses only on a non-profit making basis. This service is for individuals living in the district who have a disability, mobility problems, are rurally isolated or whose needs are not met by public transport. Membership is £10.00 per year then the member pays a contribution towards the cost of their trip at 40p per mile, minimum fare of £2.00 applicable. Trips must be pre-booked with Braintree Community Transport. The service operates Monday to Friday approximately 8.00-18.00. We don't operate evenings and weekends. The service is dependent on a volunteer being available although we rarely have to refuse a request.

Used by individuals for shopping, social events, clubs, education and any medical appointment - except hospital. Trips must end within the BDC council area or for those living north of the district we make an exception and travel into Haverhill, Sudbury, Clare etc and, depending on driver availability taking visitors to Broomfield or Colchester General Hospitals.

We prefer three working days notice to schedule but will try to accommodate all requests.



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Dial-a-ride Scheme - We have one dial-a-ride vehicle, operated by a paid driver. This scheme is predominantly for wheelchair users and their carers who live in the district and are unable to transfer into a car thereby unable to use the Social Car Scheme.

Membership and costs are the same as the Social Car Scheme.

The service operates from 9.00-17.00 Monday to Friday (flexibility may be possible).

Dial-a-ride is used in the same way as the Social Car Scheme.

Contact the Community Transport Team for application forms or with any queries – we are always happy to help.

Monday – Thursday 9.00-17.30
Fridays - 9.00-17.00

Tel/Fax 01376 327357 (answer phone outside of office hours)

Braintree District Council

Benefit Home Visiting Service

We would like to help people claim Housing Benefit, Council Tax benefit and other associated benefits even if it is just for a short time.

Many people are afraid to admit they need help and advice, are too proud, are not able to complete forms or may be separated or bereaved.

If your parish council would be happy to display posters or is aware of someone who may be entitled to make a claim please contact:

Jo Mayne, Benefit Home Visiting Officer
on 01376 557885 (direct line)



Dog Waste Bags – does your parish council have an outlet where the public can get hold of these, free of charge?

The following parish councils already keep a supply: Colne Engaine, Earls Colne, Feering, Finchingfield, Great Bardfield, Panfield, Rayne and Sible Hedingham.

Contact our Dog Wardens on 01376 551414 if your Parish Council wishes to do the same.



Braintree District Council adopts two Supplementary Planning Documents

External Artificial Lighting and Open Spaces

Braintree Council has recently adopted two new supplementary planning documents which provide detailed guidance on how the Council interprets existing planning policies in the Braintree District Local Plan Review. Both documents will apply throughout the whole of Braintree District.

The External Artificial Lighting Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted on 30th September 2009 and provides detailed guidance on how the District Council will assess planning applications which are for, or include, external artificial lighting.

The Open Space Supplementary Planning Document was adopted on 18th November 2009 and provides guidance on how open space provision and improvements will be secured through planning obligations to meet the demands arising from new residential and commercial development.

The adopted SPDs and the Report on the Consultations are currently available for public inspection at public libraries in the District. The SPDs and supporting documents are also available to view and download on the Council's website:

www.braintree.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicy/supplementaryplanningdocuments.

Any person aggrieved by the decision to adopt the Supplementary Planning Documents may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for a judicial review of that decision. A challenge must be made on the grounds that the SPD is not within the appropriate power or a procedural requirement has not been complied with. Applications must be made promptly and in any event not later than 3 months after the date on which the relevant SPD was adopted.

Contact: Stuart Kay, Consultant for Planning Policy on Tel: 01376 551414 or Email: Stuart.Kay@braintree.gov.uk

BT Phone Box Adoption - Update

British Telecom recently announced plans allowing Parish Councils to adopt the older style red telephone kiosks. In order for this to take place Braintree Council would have to allow for the removal of the telephone service from within the kiosk. So far parish councils have indicated they want to adopt 10 of the boxes out of a total of 54. Of the 54 boxes Braintree Council intends to block the removal of 9 phone services. BT has not indicated an intention to remove any of the phone kiosks at this time.

Braintree will be sending our final decision notices to BT shortly after the 15th December.

I would like to thank parish councils for their involvement during the consultation process.

Alan Massow, Senior Planning Policy Officer Tel: 01376 551414, Email:

Alan.Massow@braintree.gov.uk



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The launch of this pilot project at Belchamp St Paul's Community House in October was very well attended and gave an opportunity to meet the new recruits who will be giving a face to face signposting service for people living in rural communities:



There are 6 Agents in the Braintree District covering the following parishes:

Alphamstone, Bardfield Saling, Belchamp Otten and St Paul, Belchamp Walter, Birdbrook, Borley, Bulmer, Fairstead, Faulkbourne, Foxearth, Great Henny, Great Saling, Lamarsh, Liston, Little Henny, Little Yeldham, Middleton, Ovington, Panfield, Pentlow, Ridgewell, Shalford, Silver End, Stambourne, Terling, Tilbury Juxta Clare, Toppesfield, Twinstead and White Notley.

For further information please contact Village Agents free on Tel: 0800 9775858 or Email: enquiries@vaessex.org.uk
Website: www.villageagentsessex.org.uk



STOP PRESS

2010 will be the 40th anniversary of the designation of the Dedham Vale as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - we will be planning various events throughout the year, and especially around our anniversary date of 20th May. Although the anniversary is primarily for the AONB itself the wider project area will also receive special attention.

Events - please make sure we are aware of any events happening in your parish, so we can put them on our website too!

Cathy Smith
Communications Officer (part-time)
Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project
Tel (Project) 01473 264263 Tel (direct line): 01473 264266 Mobile: 07921 404693
Email: catherine.smith@suffolk.gov.uk c/o Environment & Transport, Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2BX UK
www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org.uk

The information contained in this newsletter is published in good faith from a variety of sources and may be subject to change.



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We will be collecting Christmas trees again On Saturday 9th January 2010

Collections as follows:

Braintree Garden Centre, Cressing Road - have kindly agreed to collect them from 10am until 3pm.

- ask the staff there for details of where to leave your tree.

One of our vehicles will be calling in at 3pm to collect them all.

Other locations/times are:

Butler Road car park, Halstead - 11:00am- 2:30pm

Stoneham Street car park, Coggeshall - 10:00 - 10:30am

Village Hall car park, Pebmarsh - 11:00 - 11:30am

Village Hall, The Green, Wickham St Paul - 12:00 -12:15pm

Recreation Road, Sible Hedingham - 12:45 - 1:15pm

Freshwell Health Centre, Wethersfield Road,

Finchingfield - 1:45 - 2:15pm



All the trees will be taken for composting.

Contact: Sarah Cross on 01376 551414 or Customer Services on 01376 552525

Keep Well, Keep Warm This Winter

For tips on financial support for fuel costs, saving money and energy, see the Keep Well, Keep Warm leaflet that includes the following information and much more:

- Try to have hot meals and drinks throughout the day to help to keep you warm;
- If you can't afford to heat all rooms in your home, heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before you go to sleep; and
- Information about grants and benefits you could be entitled to.



For your copy of this useful leaflet contact Clare Lawrence, Health and Well-being Development Officer on 01376 551414 Ext: 2328 or clare.lawrence@braintree.gov.uk

