



**The August edition of the Parish Update** takes you through to the end of the year. Most items in the newsletter give contact details but if you do have problems getting in touch with services, please remember our Parish Liaison Officer, Linda Hadley, is available to help. Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2343.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE JUST A FEW OF THE ITEMS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Project – Page 5**
- **Flooding – page 9**
- **October Parish Event – Meet your service providers - Page 3**
- **Open Space Audit – Page 11**
- **Parish Rangers/Community Warden Scheme – Page 9**
- **Planning for the future to 2021 and beyond – workshops – Page 7**
- **Parish Cluster Meetings – Page 2**
- **Training – Pages 3 & 4**
- **Village Halls – Page 12**

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AWARD WINNING VILLAGES –

**RAYNE** who have won the Rural Community Council of Essex - Calor Gas Essex Village of the Year Competition!!!! They will be representing Essex at the Regional Finals later in the year and perhaps the Nationals in the New Year.

**STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD** – Best New Entry in the Calor Best Kept Village in Essex Competition, with merit awards to **KELVEDON, PANFIELD, STEBBING AND WHITE NOTLEY AND FAULKBOURNE.**

For more information on the competition go to page 5.

### IMPORTANT NEWS

**FUNDING IS STILL AVAILABLE FROM OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT FUND – SEE PAGE 6 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS**

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Sible Hedingham Parish Council office has moved to 75 Swan Street, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, CO9 3HT.

### VILLAGE FETES/EVENTS

**Would you like to avoid a clash of fete days with nearby villages next year?**

We will be keeping a diary of fetes/events and the more parishes who contact us the better it will work!

Please contact Linda Hadley, Parish Liaison Officer on 01376 551414 Ext: 2343 or email [Linda.Hadley@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.Hadley@braintree.gov.uk) when setting a date and it may be we could help you avoid a clash of dates.



(Hedge planting at Belchamp St Paul commissioned by the Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Project)



### PARISH PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

36 parishes in the district have now signed the Braintree District Parish Partnership Agreement, 28 of which signed at the Parish Forum in April. Councillor Wendy Scattergood, Cabinet member for planning and rural issues, was on hand to sign the agreements at the event. If your parish would like to discuss this further or would like to sign, please contact **Kitty Barrett on 01376 557746 or email [Kitty.Barrett@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:Kitty.Barrett@braintree.gov.uk)**



### PARISH CLUSTER MEETINGS

We have come to the end of another round of Parish Cluster meetings and look forward to the next in the autumn.

Thank you to those of you who completed and returned the Cluster Questionnaire.

About 50% of you responded to the questionnaire and it appears most parishes are happy with the cluster process. However, we have taken on board some of the comments and will be making adjustments, which should improve the running of the autumn round of meetings.

Action points from the spring/summer round of cluster meetings have included the following issues and information has been included in this Newsletter, which we hope will prove useful.

- Parish Rangers (page 9)
- Speed Indicator Devices (page 10)
- Planning training/trade waste seminar - (page 4)

However, please contact our Parish Liaison Officer, Linda Hadley, if there are any issues from the meetings which you feel need to be followed up.

**Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2343, or Email: [Linda.Hadley@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.Hadley@braintree.gov.uk)**

As we're now thinking about the autumn round of cluster meetings, please contact Helen Riches as soon as you have set your date or if you would like help and advice.

**Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2005, or Email: [helen.riches@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:helen.riches@braintree.gov.uk)**

### COMING SOON

#### WARNER TEXTILE ARCHIVE

The Warner Textile Archive's Autumn/Winter programme of adult workshops and talks will be available from 1st August. Workshops include applique inspired by the fantastic textile collection, as well as an insight into how the Victorians furnished their parlours! **For more information, contact 01376 557741.** Better still, visit the Archive's Gallery at Warner's Mill, Silks Way Braintree - open weekly Wednesday - Saturday between 11 - 4!



## **AUTUMN PARISH EVENT- A Fete For Parish And Town Councils – Meet Your Service Providers**

**On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006** instead of the parish evening we hold in December, we are holding a different kind of event.

The idea is to hold an informal indoor Fete for Parish Councils, where the Parish Council representatives will be able to drop in and visit the fete stallholders any time between 4pm and 9pm. The venue will be at Causeway House.

### **Stall holders**

The intention is to have a fete stall for many of the services that Parish/Town Councils may use or be interested in. This will include a number of Braintree District Services. Other organisations such as ECC and the Police will be invited to hold stalls.

There will be the chance to meet officers and Members in an informal atmosphere where -

You can - discuss services, request information/advice, make suggestions for improvements or let us know if we have got it right.

We can - promote our services, ask you for feedback and get to know more about your local achievements or concerns.

All Parish/Town Councils will be given a plan of stallholders to enable them to target those services of greatest relevance.

If you would like to know more, please **contact Kitty Barrett on Tel 01376 557746 or, Email [Kitty.Barrett@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:Kitty.Barrett@braintree.gov.uk)**

## **RECYCLING ROADSHOWS**

For a list of dates, times and destinations for the roadshow trailer this summer/autumn, visit the BDC webpage – Environment – Waste &

Recycling – Recycling Events. Alternatively phone Jenny Nice on 01376 551414 Ext: 2208. At each event staff will be on hand to answer any queries. Halstead, Castle Hedingham, Rivenhall, Gosfield, Colne Engaine, White Colne, Braintree, Silver End, Kelvedon, Witham, Hatfield Peverel are just some of their destinations.

## **RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ESSEX – VILLAGE HALL CONFERENCE**

**On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2006** between 10 am and 3.45 pm at Margaretting Village Hall, near Chelmsford, RCCE will be holding a Village Hall Conference. There will be speakers from the Big Lottery, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (re the new Fire Safety Order) and Charity Bank (re Affordable Finance) amongst others. The cost for Village Hall members is £15 per person including lunch. Enquiries to Sue Sheppard, Village Halls Adviser, RCCE – Tel: 01245 352046 Ext 111.

## **TRAINING**

**The Essex Training Partnership (ETP)** is an arm of the **Essex Association of Local Councils**, which provides Courses for Clerks, Councillors and other officers of parish and town councils.

Every Clerk has been sent a purple Training Reference Guide describing the types of training available and any newly appointed Clerk is sent their own Guide introducing them to the services available.

ETP provides training tailored to completion of the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), including intensive courses, along with training for more individual topics – topics including Budgeting and Precept; Grounds Person Course; Law & Procedures for Parish/Town Councils.

**For further information please contact: [Alison.East@ealc.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.East@ealc.gov.uk) or telephone 01371 879722.**



## **Do you find the planning system confusing? Plans? Frameworks? Strategies? Where do the policies come from? And how can you influence them?**

The Rural Community Council of Essex has worked with the Essex Village Design Statement Group, Essex Planning Officers Association and Inspire East to produce a guide to the Planning System. The guide:

- provides an overview of the Statutory Planning documents produced by the different tiers of government;
- describes the Community Strategy and Local Development Framework in detail and explains how individuals and community groups can get involved in their production;
- describes community-led plans and their links to statutory plans.

The guide was 'launched' at the Inspire East Big Event in June and is being distributed to parish and town councils and community groups in Essex. The Rural Community Council of Essex is also running a one day training course later this year to complement the pack and hopefully improve understanding of the new system and the opportunities for individuals and groups to get involved.

**For details contact**  
**shelley.labbett@essexrcc.org.uk - Tel: 01245 352046 Ext: 103**

## **FUTURE TRAINING AVAILABLE AT BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **IT**

Spotlights - short sessions covering one subject relevant to computer use – will be available to parish clerks - notification of dates will be sent as and when these sessions occur.

### **PLANNING**

Further training on elements of the planning process is being considered and parishes will be contacted.

### **TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF WASTE STRATEGY AND DISPOSAL**

As a result of an action point from one of the cluster meetings, Braintree District Council have been in contact with Essex County Council who have agreed to attend a seminar and speak on the technical aspects of the waste strategy etc. Parishes will be contacted when this event has been organised.

### **STREET SWEEPING MACHINE FOR HIRE!**

We have a street sweeping machine your parish may wish to hire – for further details and suitability **contact Mick Galley Tel: 01376 332369.**

### **TOWN AND PARISH NEWS**

#### **FIGHTING TO STOP POST OFFICE RELOCATION**

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August, a public meeting was held at the Empire Cinema in Halstead, hosted by the Town Council and Chaired by Sir Alan Haselhurst MP. Representatives from the Post Office gave their reasons for the relocation, followed by statements and questions from the many people assembled. The support to stop the relocation came from Town Councillors, District Councillors, County Councillors, Union Representatives, Town Centre Strategy Group, various businesses, Post Office staff and of course, the very many residents who attended. Grave concern was expressed for the suitability of the site. If you would like more information or offer support to Halstead, contact the Town Council at their offices The Mill House, The Causeway, Halstead, Tel: 01787 476480.



**DEDHAM VALE AND STOUR VALLEY PROJECT** is one, which Braintree District Council has been proud to support. The Project works with local landowners, communities and its partners to help enhance the environmental and cultural quality of the Stour Valley.

In the last few months, they have worked closely with a number of organisations, including the Braintree Wildlife Group and River Colne Countryside Project to convert 10 World War 2 pill boxes into hibernation sites for bats. The last of these at Henny was completed on 29<sup>th</sup> June. A further 5 pill boxes are being converted in the Colne Valley.



If you think the Project could assist you to improve the valley please contact them.

**Tel: 01473 264263** **Email: [dedhamvale.project@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:dedhamvale.project@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk)**  
**(Website: [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org))**

## RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ESSEX – CALOR ESSEX VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2006 and BEST-KEPT VILLAGE IN ESSEX

Rayne are celebrating as well-deserved winners of the Essex Village of the Year competition! They will receive a special £500 award from Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to acknowledge their work in “building community life”. This win entitles them to go forward to represent the county in the Calor Village of the Year for England competition, with a chance of sharing in the £39,000 prize fund.

The judges commented “Rayne stands out for the really positive way it is embracing change” and other remarks from the judges included “a well supported Parish Plan has highlighted the need for further improvements at the playing field and village”.



Rayne  
Councillor Pat Roberts (Vice Chair), Councillor Diane Shepherd, Mrs Melanie Whiteside (Clerk) and Mr Dean West (PARK - Playground Action for Rayne Kids).

Congratulations also to Steeple Bumpstead who have been awarded Best New Entry in the Best Kept Village in Essex Competition and to Kelvedon, Panfield, Stebbing, White Notley and Faulkbourne who all received Merit Awards.



## FUNDING IS STILL AVAILABLE FROM OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT FUND

The good news is that we have been able to fund 14 projects from this year's Rural Communities Development Fund but the even better news is that there is still some funding available!

You can apply at any time up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, or until the money runs out.

Applications will be considered monthly and applications should arrive by the last Friday in each month.

All other criteria remain the same and your project must be capable of being completed by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

The maximum any Parish can apply for is £5,000 so, if you are one of this year's successful applicants but your grant was for less than £5,000, you can submit a further application as long as the total of the two grants is no more than £5,000.

Guidelines and application forms can be emailed or sent to you in hard copy just **ring 01376 551414 Ext 2329** or email: **angve@braintree.gov.uk**

Angela Verghese will also be pleased to hear from you if you would like to discuss your project first or need any help with your application.

## VILLAGE SHOPS – NEW GRANT

Does your village have 200 or more people resident and looking to set up a community owned village shop? The Village CORE Programme can offer grants of up to £20,000. **Full details available from [www.virsa.org](http://www.virsa.org) Tel: 01993 814377**

**Look out for a series of BBC 4 programmes – The Perfect Village (Episode 6 – 1<sup>st</sup> September) when the village of Silver End is featured.**

## SILVER END MEMORIAL GARDENS

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July, Councillor David Finch, Chairman of Braintree District Council, in the presence of Mrs Ariel Crittall and Mrs Laura Russell (nee Crittall) unveiled a plaque commemorating the receipt of a major grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The grant, along with partnership funding from Silver End Parish Council, Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and sponsorship and funds raised by the community has allowed the renovation to be carried out.

Silver End Memorial Gardens are now restored and the park looks cared-for, is welcoming and feels a safe place to visit.



A number of key volunteers were present to receive the personal thanks of the Chairman for their interest in and commitment to the Gardens over a number of years.

If you would like any further information on the renovation of the gardens please **contact Jenny Claydon, Landscape Architect, Forward Planning on 01376 551414** or email **jencl@braintree.gov.uk**



## TALKING TRANSFER: IN BRIEF

The Council's proposal to transfer homes to a brand new housing association – set up with its help – is now progressing at a pace. Here is the latest news:

- The new housing association has now been named 'Greenfields Community Housing'
- 3 Show Homes were recently opened between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> August, to showcase the work that could be done to tenants homes if we transfer. Each home featured new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, insulation, boilers and rewiring. Thank you to all who came along
- The Shadow Board for Greenfields Community Housing is now almost complete. John Flack, an independent member, has been voted as Chairman and Cynthia Woodhouse, a tenant representative, has been voted as Vice Chair
- The results of recent market research carried out amongst tenants and leaseholders on the subject of transfer has indicated a substantial shift towards a more favourable opinion of transfer
- Tenants are continuing to receive their popular 'Talking Transfer' newsletter monthly and a second DVD is in the pipeline
- The tenant and leaseholder ballot will take place before the end of the year. Before this happens, tenants and leaseholders will get all the facts they need about the transfer in the offer document. This legal document sets out clearly what both transfer and staying with the Council would mean.

**Please call the Better Homes Team on FREEPHONE 0800 7811 344 for more information**

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF BRAINTREE DISTRICT TO 2021 AND BEYOND

During June and July 2006 Braintree District Council, in partnership with the Rural Community Council of Essex, ran a series of seminars to involve the local community in planning for the future. In June we invited elected members and community group representatives to seminars in each of the three areas of the district.

Below is a brief summary of the attendance at the three area seminars and the priorities recorded:

- Three seminars attended by 91 participants, which included 36 elected members and 38 community group representatives.
- 43 of the participants were over the age of 60, only 1 participant was under 25.
- The three main towns (the location of the seminars) were well represented. 27 of the 52 rural parishes were represented.
- The highest priority overall was for affordable, efficient public transport, closely followed by affordable housing and energy efficiency in new and existing homes
- Other priorities were improved road infrastructure, use of renewable energy, support for small businesses, local or improved access to health care and more police 'on the beat'. The provision of a new community hospital was a high priority for Braintree Area residents.

In July we ran sessions for young people in school citizenship classes. We have also held workshops with Council Members and with the Council's Economic Development, Transport and Cultural Partnership Boards. We have three further sessions scheduled for September to involve older teens / early 20s and landowners /agents. Also in September, a leaflet and a



questionnaire will be delivered to every house and business in the district.

Once this initial involvement stage is completed, the information will be used to update the Community Strategy and to prepare the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. A 'Preferred Issues and Options' document will be prepared and will be distributed for consultation early in 2007. If you are interested in continuing to be involved in this process and would like to comment on the document, please register your details with the planning department who can then keep you updated.

**Contact Sandra Green on 01376 551414 Ext: 2567 Email: [Sandra.Green@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:Sandra.Green@braintree.gov.uk)**

## ESSEX HISTORY FAIR

One of the first projects, which has benefited from improved communication between parishes and services provided directly by Braintree District Council, or in partnership with the voluntary sectors, has been the Essex History Fair.

Over 5,000 people thronged the historic Market Place of Braintree on Sunday 25th June, to celebrate the rich and diverse heritage of Essex. It was pleasing that many of the small village societies were represented and the links with the individual parishes undoubtedly helped with this.

Eight local churches also opened their doors to visitors and created mini histories of each church, something which will be of great benefit.

Our District is defined by its villages, yet the image of Essex is often very biased and attracts stereo-typical labels such as "Basildon", "London Suburbs", "Essex Man", "Essex Girl". The History Fair has been held bi-annually since 1986 and helps redress the balance by bringing to the wider public's attention the variety of our rural heritage and the individuality of the villages.

Some of the smaller schools also took part, including Ridgewell, White Notley, Cressing and Heddingham. Ridgewell, guided by Head Teacher Andy Richbell, undertook an innovative project on powerpoint showing the village "Then and Now". This was shown to the public at the History Fair as part of an Essex-wide exhibition.

## CONTACTING BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Where the officer's name or extension number is known, dial **01376 551414** and ask for the officer by name or the department i.e. planning, or key in the extension number.

If you do not have these details or you have a general enquiry about Council services, telephone 01376 552525, which is the main Braintree District Council contact number.

The Call Centre operates a text service on 07797 803203 or Fax on 01376 332357.

The following services are currently available on line at [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk), where further details can be found:-

- abandoned vehicles
- Clean Team
- electoral registration
- housing repairs
- licensing
- parking information
- pest control
- planning
- recycling
- refuse collection
- special collections
- street cleaning
- street lighting
- street name plates

**DON'T FORGET TO LOOK AT OUR WEBSITE FOR ADVICE AND INFORMATION ON SERVICES [WWW.BRAINTREE.GOV.UK](http://WWW.BRAINTREE.GOV.UK)**



## FLOODING

Flooding responsibilities are often quite hard to determine however the general rule of thumb is:

- The owner of a property has the responsibility to protect their own property as long as they do not deliberately direct the flow of water towards another persons property i.e pump or channel it.
- The Environment Agency is the "Supervising Authority" but deal mainly with main rivers.
- Essex County Highways have the responsibility to ensure that the highway is kept flood free as far as reasonably practicable.
- Braintree District Council is the "Operating Authority" and deal with localised flooding i.e. ditches, pipes, and culverts.

All of the above authorities have "Permissive Powers" to become involved with any area of flooding which means that they are able to take legal action against offenders if we choose to become involved.

It would be advisable for members of the public to contact Braintree District Council in the first instance and we will be able to signpost them in the right direction. Phone: 01376 552525 or  
Email: [csc@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:csc@braintree.gov.uk)

## SALT BINS

In the autumn, Essex County Council will be topping up the roadside salt bins as usual. New salt bins can be sponsored and purchased by Parish Councils, positioning to be agreed with Essex County Council. Contact Essex County Council on 01245 240000 – Highways Maintenance – Braintree District.

## PARISH RANGERS/COMMUNITY WARDEN SCHEME

Having listened to what parishes have had to say about the service and the feedback received, the Parish Ranger service, introduced in 2005, is being further developed in the rural areas with the introduction of Community Wardens in town centres and urban areas in the Braintree District.

An interim review of the scheme identified that in some cases the working arrangements provided an inconsistent and variable quality of service. To address this, the Rangers working hours will be increased through a mix of both part and full-time members of staff.

A small working group of officers from the District Council and Police has been set up to lead on developing and implementing new proposals, with a view to implementation from the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006. The role of the Group will focus on developing the role of the Parish Rangers, as follows:-

- Maintain a flexible work arrangement during weekdays and weekends and target those areas more effectively where there are ongoing problems.
- Carry out operational tasks as an integral part of the role, e.g. litter-picking, strimming, removal of fly-tipping and fly-posting, and taking a lead on supporting other community activities.
- Continue to provide an official presence to help prevent crime, by encouraging the building of strong communities and discouraging low-level anti-social behaviour to help communities to feel safer and more confident in their neighbourhood.
- Increase public consultation to find out what is going on and if there are any problems that need addressing.
- Offer information and advice about Council and other Services and liaise with those Services on behalf of the Public.



- Identify and visit on a regular basis the most vulnerable members of the community to make sure they have the help they need.
- Report all environmental problems and encourage the Public to do the same by promoting community safety and the “community champion” role.
- Work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams, passing on information about criminal activity and anti-social behaviour to help them target their resources effectively.
- Tackle and enforce low level anti-social behaviour and encourage young people to find alternative activities.
- Visit local schools and youth groups to talk to children about safety and looking after their neighbourhood.
- Organise and participate in community activities that provide diversionary activities for young people.

At this stage it is not possible to confirm a definitive structure or the names of the Rangers that will be allocated to the Parishes. Any changes that we make will not be detrimental or reduce the current levels of service provided, but will strengthen the opportunity for our staff to work more closely with Parish Councils and Communities in support of the Council's object to reduce Anti Social Behaviour.

The concept of the Parish Ranger service is being extended to cover the 3 Towns and Urban areas in our District, with the introduction of 4 full time members of staff. One of these posts will provide co-ordination, supervision for this part of the service and all the Parish Rangers in Rural areas.

Parishes will receive a further update shortly, but in the meantime if you have questions, please **contact Mick Galley Tel: 01376 332369/01376 551414** or alternatively, arrangements could be made for someone to attend a meeting if there are any specific issues your parish wishes to raise.

## SPEEDING VEHICLES THROUGH VILLAGES

It's become apparent from discussions at a number of cluster meetings that one of the most important issues, which continues to be a problem for parishes, is that of speeding vehicles through villages.

The following schemes have been set up by Essex County Council and Essex Police to help solve the problem. Parishes have been sent up to date information and policy from both authorities on these schemes.

- **Community Speed Watch** – a traffic-monitoring scheme that is co-ordinated by the Police and managed and run by volunteers in policing. Contact Adam Pipe (Essex Police Mobile Support Division) on Tel: 01245 240600 Ext: 480527.
- **Vehicle Activated Speed Signs and Speed Indicator Devices** – Essex County Council are reviewing sites and putting together a programme by August of sites with definite speeding traffic problems, authenticated by an ECC speed survey.

In addition to this programme, if parishes wish to purchase Speed Indicator Devices or combine resources with other parishes to do so, ECC will assist you in looking at all locations and agreeing where is suitable. County have a small amount of funds set aside for repairing these devices but when this has been used there will be no more funding available until the next financial year.

Contact the Essex County Council Traffic Team at the Mid Area Highways office to discuss further if you wish to have a speed indicator device, as authorisation to put these on the highway is required. **Tel: 01245 240000**  
**Email: [highways-midarea@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:highways-midarea@essexcc.gov.uk)**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE – CONTACT DETAILS** – Please phone Linda Hadley Tel: 01376 551414 Ext 2343 for a copy if you haven't already received these from Essex Police.



## BRAINTREE OPEN SPACE AUDIT

Braintree District Council is currently undertaking an open space and recreation audit for the whole of Braintree District in accordance with guidance from central government.

### What is it?

The Council will be looking at a number of types of open space, sport and recreation facilities including formal parks and gardens, informal recreation areas, amenity green space in housing estates and villages, children's play areas, linear green spaces such as river walks and dismantled railways, natural and semi-natural green spaces such as woodlands, meadows and river valleys, formal sports grounds and playing pitches and school playing fields. An assessment will be made of the quantity, quality, accessibility, type of use and level of use of these spaces.

### Why are we doing it?

The purpose of the audit is to prepare the way for a green space strategy, which will ensure that a wide range of open spaces, sport and recreation provision in the District is protected, maintained and enhanced and to enable future needs to be met, by new provision if necessary. The audit will also be fed into future planning policy and be used as a basis for a Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments, which will help secure financial contributions from developers to be used to provide, equip and maintain open spaces.

### How do we do it?

The Council is assessing the sites in terms of their quantity, quality and accessibility. So far over half of around 500 sites to be audited have been visited, including most of the sites in the parished areas. Parish Councils have already been asked to verify information, which is currently held by the District Council. Quite often they are able to verify whether land that we have identified is open space used by the public, and advise us of additional open spaces that the Council was unaware of. It would be greatly

appreciated if those parishes, which have not yet responded, could do so as soon as possible.

We will soon be consulting with sports clubs, parish councils, other interested stakeholders including young people, amenity groups and the local strategic partnership and individual users of open spaces to find out whether nor not there is an adequate amount of open space and to get their views on its quality and accessibility. A household survey will also be used to obtain the views of both users and non-users of open spaces.

### What will be gained by it?

These results will be matched against population forecasts and defined standards to assess whether there is sufficient open space, and comparison will be made with other local authorities in setting these standards. This will be followed later in the year by the preparation of an Open Space Strategy and Action Plan, which will:

1. Evaluate options for the protection, enhancement or relocation of open space, modification of space to meet a more pressing need for another type of open space, and identification of provision that is surplus to requirements. The latter would only be considered in extreme cases where there is a large surplus and under-use of a particular type of space.
2. Agree a vision which can be fed into the Community Plan and Local development Framework Core Policy
3. Set priorities for the planning, management and maintenance of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities.

The adopted strategy will be used as a basis for delivery, community involvement and bidding for resources.

### When do we publish the results?

District Councillors will be considering the results of the audit early next year, although the development of strategy may take a little longer.



## VILLAGE HALLS

**Would you like free help and advice in running your village hall ? Do you think your village hall could benefit from a free Business Health Check? If the answer is yes, please read on for details of a service currently provided by Braintree District Council.**

**Business Development Services (N/W Essex) Limited** is based at the Corner House, Braintree. Its principal aim is to advise those in the community thinking about or already setting up their own business. Our highly qualified business advisers will help a client formulate the business idea and advise how to set up the business. We then provide a business-planning

course, which will produce a business plan that can be used for gaining finance where necessary.

**BDS Limited** also helps existing small businesses through our Business Health Check programme. An adviser will go on site to the business premises, undertake a review, identify the best direction for that business and formulate an action plan with the client. All our services are free to the client. Business Development Services is funded by Braintree District Council, Uttlesford District Council and Business Link for Essex. **For further information about this and all our other services please call 01376 340770.**



## Helping today's entrepreneurs

### Thinking of Starting a New Business

*or Already running a small business in North West Essex?*

### Need some help?

**Our offices are located at:  
Braintree, Great Dunmow & Saffron Walden**

**The Enterprise Agency for Braintree and Uttlesford Districts**

**FREE business advice from our team of qualified and experienced Advisers**

**To book an appointment call  
01376 340770**

Have you any ideas for future articles in the newsletter? Perhaps your parish is involved in a project and you would like to share your experience/success with other parishes/towns? Contact Linda Hadley – Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2343 Email: Linda.Hadley@braintree.gov.uk

Contact other members of the team:

Councillor Wendy Scattergood – Tel: 01787 269881 Email: wendyscattergood@btconnect.com  
Kitty Barrett – Tel: 01376 557746 Email: kitty.barrett@braintree.gov.uk  
Jan Cole – Tel: 01245 352046 Email: jan.cole@essexrcc.org.uk



# PARISH UPDATE



ISSUE 2 - AUGUST 2006



Braintree District Council's Town and Parish Council Newsletter

