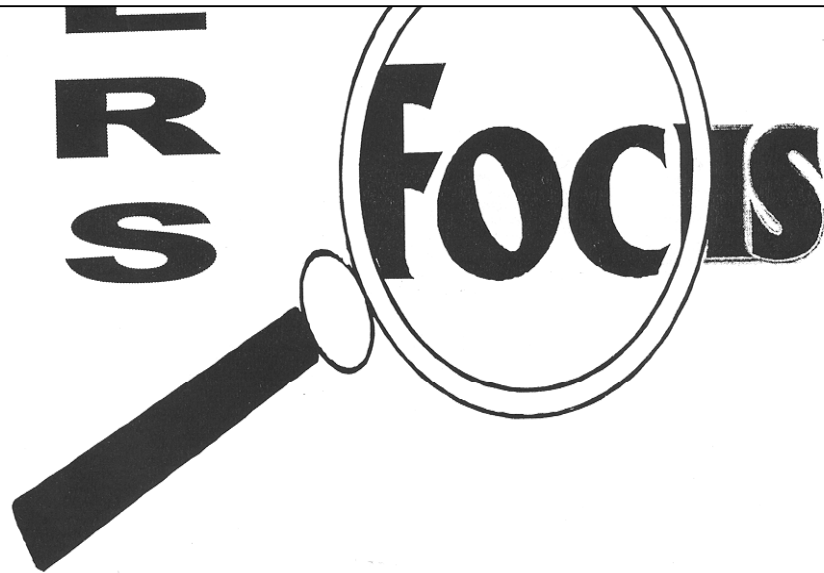


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*Members' Focus is available on-line at [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)  
- Choose "Council & Democracy" from the menu on the left,  
then "Members Focus".*

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**Focus**

**April 2008**

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AREA: All

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

SUBJECT: Affordable Housing Development, April 2008(4th qtr)	CONTACT OFFICER: Tim Lucas, David Steel
TEL/EMAIL No.:01376 551414 ext. 2124, 2138 <a href="mailto:timlu@braintree.gov.uk">timlu@braintree.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:david.steel@braintree.gov.uk">david.steel@braintree.gov.uk</a>	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
INFORMATION:	
<b><u>Development Programme Update – 2007/08</u></b>	
<b>Site Acquisitions, New Starts and Completions, fourth quarter 2007/08:</b>	
<b><u>Site Acquisitions</u></b>	
<b>Walter Lane, Pebmarsh :</b> Land acquired by RSL in preparation for starting on site in May 2008 for 10 rented units.	
<b><u>New Starts</u></b> – There were no new starts this quarter	
<b><u>Completions 29 units:</u></b>	
<b>Halstead – Tidings Hill:</b> 4 rented units and 2 shared ownership units completed January 2008. These handovers complete the scheme.	
<b>Witham, Boars Tye Road, Silver End:</b> 7 rented units and 8 shared ownership units completed during March 2008. This completes the affordable housing provision as part of the Section 106.	
<b>Braintree – Bus Depot, Fairfield Road :</b> 8 shared ownership units completed during January and February 2008.	
<b><u>New developments currently in progress:</u></b>	
<b>Braintree – Mill Hill:</b> 10 rental units due to be handed over by developers as Section 106 agreement. Handover expected July 2008.	
<b>Braintree Bus Garage, Fairfield Road:</b> Started on site in July 2006 with 10 units for shared ownership. Final 2 completions expected June 2008.	
<b>Braintree, Bailey Bridge Road:</b> 29 rented units and 3 shared ownership units started on site June 2007 with completion expected October 2008.	
<b>Braintree Football Club Site:</b> Funding approved by Housing Corporation to enable the whole scheme of 35 units (20 rented and 15 shared ownership units) to be for affordable housing. First handovers anticipated October 2008.	
<b><u>Housing Corporation funding / RSL funding has been allocated for the following developments with a start on site during this financial year (2008/09):</u></b>	
<b>Witham, Spring Lodge:</b> Planning application approved for 15 units for rent and 11 units for shared ownership. Funding allocated to RSL and start on site is now expected May 2008.	
<b>Water Lane, Pebmarsh:</b> Development of 10 rented units on exception site. Application for planning approval granted November 2007. Start on site delayed and now expected	

April 2008

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to be May 2008 following outcome of survey for the presence of Newts on the land.

**Gestingthorpe, Sudbury Road:** Planning application approved for 4 rented units and 2 shared ownership units on rural exception site. Funding approved by the Housing Corporation. Start on site anticipated May 2008.

**Halstead, Parsonage Street:** Planning permission granted December 2007 for 13 affordable units. Start on site anticipated for May / June 2008.

Nacro – Braintree Community Sports Project

Members Focus update – April 2008.

## High Sheriff Award Funding

The project was successful in a small funding application too the High Sheriff Award to raise funding for the project to deliver further Sports Leaders UK, JFO (Junior Football Orgainers) and YLA (Young Leaders Award) courses for young people to assess. The funding will allow the project to deliver these courses to the most hard to reach young people, and allow them the opportunity to gain a national recognised sports qualification as well as looking at increasing young people self-esteem and self-confidence.

## Youth Opportunities Fund

The Project was successful in a £2,000 funding application too the Youth Opportunities Fund. The funding will be used to develop the Community Street League (CSL) across the Braintree District aswell as rural locations. The funding will be used to purchase kit, equipment, payment of facilities aswell as general admin. The CSL is designed the benefit the Young People from the community by allowing them the opportunity to take part in a structured Football League that will consist of Fixtures and training days aswell as raising self-confidence, self esteem and helath and fitness.

## Young People complete Young Leaders Award. (YLA)

30 young people aged 9 – 13 years successfully completed the YLA award which is a nationally recognised qualification and equivalent to a Key stage 2 & 3 in the National Curriculum. The course took place over a full working day, which involved both theory and practical work. The course covered a different verity of aspects allowing the young people to explore issues on Health and Fitness, basic communication skills and how to become a positive sports leader. The Course was delivered by the Project and run in partnership with Youth Service.

## Sessions

April 2008

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The project is currently delivering sessions in the areas of Halstead, Witham and Braintree to engage young people into positive activity and away from Anti-Social behaviour. Each session is becoming more and more positive each week and is engaging more different young people for each of these three areas that the project works in.

The project is also working with in local primary school across Braintree, (GT Bradfords, Lyons Hall, Rayne) to work with young people on playground and classroom interaction using sport.

AREA: Environment

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Caring for the Environment

SUBJECT: Dangerous Dogs	CONTACT OFFICER: Stuart Thompson
TEL/EMAIL :No.Ext 2217 stuth@braintree.gov.uk	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
<b>INFORMATION: Unruly dog placed under control order</b>  The Dog Warden Service of Braintree District Council has successfully taken action to control a dog that has bitten members of the public twice.  On the 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2007 a young girl was delivering the Evening Gazette to 48 Courtauld Road, Braintree. As she was walking down the drive after putting paper through letterbox a Border Collie dog from the property pushed the gate open and bit the girl on the left calf. The wound was bleeding and had to be dressed and a course of anti-biotics taken. The Complaint made to Essex Police.  On the 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2007, a Post woman was delivering the post to 48 Courtauld Road, Braintree. As she approached the letterbox she could hear barking then a Border Collie jumped up at the gate. The gate came open. The dog jumped up and bit her right forearm. The Post woman shouted at the dog to 'Back Off'. It released and started barking. The Post woman backed off to the wall when the dog jumped at her again biting her forearm again. Mrs Threadgold came out of the house and put the dog in. The Post woman reported the incident to her manager who passed the complaint to the Dog Wardens.  The matter was investigated by the Dog Warden Service and referred to the Magistrates court under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 in that the Border Collie belonging to Mr & Mrs Threadgold of 48 Courtauld Road, Braintree is dangerously out of control.  At the hearing on the on the 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2008, the owners of the dog, David & Jeanette Threadgold were issued a Dog control order to keep under control at all	

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## MEMBERS' FOCUS

times, and ordered to pay costs of £400 to the Council.

AREA: Environment

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Caring for the Environment

SUBJECT: Dangerous Dogs	CONTACT OFFICER: Stuart Thompson
TEL/EMAIL :No.Ext 2217 stuth@braintree.gov.uk	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
INFORMATION:  <b>Terrorising dogs placed under control order</b>  The Dog Warden Service of Braintree District Council has successfully taken action to control two Staffordshire Bull Terriers that savaged another dog.  On the 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2007, the Council received a complaint that two Staffordshire bull terriers, had attacked a West Highland Terrier whilst it was being walked on a lead by its owner on the green area by the river on the Fairview Estate, Braintree. The dogs would not release the West Highland Terrier and had to be beaten to release West Highland Terrier.  The matter was investigated by the Dog Warden Service and referred to the Magistrates court under section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871 in that the Two Staffordshire Bull Terriers belonging to Mr Darren Parish of 5 Collingwood Close, Braintree were dangerously out of control.  At the hearing on the on the 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2008, the Magistrates places a dog control order on the dogs in that they must be kept under control at all times and that they be leashed and muzzled when in a public place. The Magistrates also awarded costs of £400 to the Council.	

AREA: Whole District

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: To Help People Feel Safe and Well

SUBJECT: Disabled Facilities Grants ( DFG)	CONTACT OFFICER: Haydn Bates
TEL/EMAIL No.: ext 2210 hayba@braintree.gov.uk	BACKGROUND PAPERS: Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy
INFORMATION:	

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Members will be aware that this department awards mandatory means tested grants to enable disabled owner- occupiers or private tenants to adapt their homes to enable them to live more independently. This year we have awarded grants up to a total value of in excess of £500k to around 120 individuals. The schemes vary from the installation of a stair lift to a single storey extension to meet the needs of a severely disabled child.

The Government has undertaken a major review of the system and intends to implement the following changes from this April

- The maximum grant payable is to be increased from £25k to £30k with the future possibility of increasing this to £50k
- The scope of mandatory work eligible for grant aid is to be extended to include providing access to the rear garden of the property if applicable.
- Improving the existing DFG specific means test by “passporting” those applicants in receipt of certain other means tested benefits enabling them to receive an automatic 100% grant
- Local authorities will have a new power to reclaim a proportion of grants in excess of £5k should the property be sold or transferred within ten years of the grant being paid. The maximum that may be reclaimed is £10k
- Currently, 60% of the funding for the DFG comes from specific Communities and Local Government grants, and Local Authorities are required to find the remaining 40% from their own resources. It is intended to abolish this split and Authorities will receive a DFG allocation without a specific requirement to match this funding.

The review of the grant process is still on-going and it is likely that other changes will be introduced.

AREA: Braintree District

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Create a Cleaner and Greener District

<p><b>SUBJECT:</b> Draft Braintree Green Spaces Strategy – Public Consultation</p> <p><b>TEL/EMAIL No.:</b> Ext. 2170/ stuka@braintree.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b> Stuart Kay, Planning Consultant</p> <p><b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b> - Draft Braintree Green Spaces Strategy. - Agenda Items considered at Local Committees during February and March.</p>
<p><b>INFORMATION:</b></p> <p>Following endorsement of the Draft Braintree Green Spaces Strategy by the three Local Committees in February and March, the document has now been published for public consultation. The Strategy includes the report on the audit of</p>	

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# MEMBERS' FOCUS

open spaces and is accompanied by a series of maps showing the location of open spaces. It has been sent to the parish councils and selected community organisations, and advertised in the Council's column in the Braintree and Witham Times. It may be viewed on the Council's website, where there is also a comment form which can be downloaded.

The consultation period ends on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May, following which the responses will be considered by the Strategy Development Group in June before the Strategy is considered by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> July.

AREA: Environment

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Caring for the Environment

SUBJECT: Flytipping prosecution	CONTACT OFFICER: Diane Parsons
TEL/EMAIL :No.Ext 2236 diapa@braintree.gov.uk	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
<p><b>INFORMATION: Vigilant public help catch flytipper</b></p> <p>The Environmental Protection Department of Braintree District Council has successfully prosecuted a fly-tipper who dumped waste in the entrance to a field.</p> <p>On the 25th September 2007 the Council received a telephone call from a member of the public who reported seeing a white transit van in a entrance to a field off Howbridge Hall Road, Witham at 5.00pm on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2007 and a man was seen off-loading 2 large rolls of agricultural type wire from it. The witness took the registration details of the vehicle and passed this information to Environmental Services. A DVLA check revealed the vehicle was registered to a hire company in Heybridge, Maldon. On contacted the company they confirmed the vehicle in question was hired to a Mr. Timothy Johnston of Littlebury Farm, White Notley on the day in question.</p> <p>Further investigation established that Mr. Johnston had hired the van to transport furniture etc to his property. Whilst returning the van to Maldon, he took the opportunity to dispose of the 2 large rolls of wire which had been left by the previous owners of Littlebury Farm, as the van was large enough to take these items. Mr. Johnston said it was his intention to dispose of the wire at the civic amenity site in Witham but on approaching the site via Pasture Road, Witham he could not get the van through the width restriction in the road. Despite confirming he was familiar with the facilities at the site as he had used them before, when asked why he had not approached the site from the alternative route, Freebournes Road, which has no width restriction, Mr. Johnston said he was not aware there was another route. Mr. Johnston explained that he was then conscious of the fact that he needed to return the van by a certain time so continued on towards Maldon. On passing Howbridge Hall Road he saw the</p>	

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entrance to the field and off-loaded the rolls of wire there. He then returned the empty van to the hire company.

Mr. Johnston was reported for an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1990, which carries a fine not exceeding £20,000 and/or 6 months in prison on summary conviction in a magistrate's court.

In court in the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Mr. Johnston pleaded guilty to the offence. The Magistrates after consideration imposed a fine of £650 for the offence, a victim fee of £15 and costs of £350.

LGA 2<sup>nd</sup> Sustainable Communities Conference and exhibition.  
Future Places – thriving economies and healthy communities.

11 – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

A wet and windy Liverpool, celebrating the 2008 European City of Culture, opened this year's conference. Liverpool is enjoying a 3.5 billion-pound regeneration project. The city under the banner of "Enterprise Liverpool" is living a period of mass boom and optimism. With a sense of pride and opportunity in the air, establishing Liverpool on a worldwide platform, the conference opened.

The conference was an opportunity for all of us with a responsibility for delivering services to ensure our towns and cities meet the diverse demands not just of current generations but of those in the future.

The conference offered the opportunity to listen to some of the most foremost political figures across the communities agenda. It also offered a chance to hear how people, on the ground, are working towards creating sustainable communities.

The LGA, through its 'PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST' banner, is campaigning to highlight the communities agenda. This year the LGA will launch many major campaigns on issues such as localism, affordable housing and climate change.

The Citizens Agenda is to be embraced said Sir Simon Milton, the Chairman of the LGA. Sir Simon also highlighted the important role that councils play in the big issues effecting Britain today. He expressed the view that local councils should be set free of centralised control.

The growing role of the LAA and the MAA became topics of hot conversation. Conference delegates were united in their view that strong LAA's and MAA's were imperative in delivering successful local projects. The economic advantages of collective procurement, shared back office functions, seamless

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

front line services, infrastructure, affordable housing and carbon reduction were all highlighted as major partnership opportunities for the LAA and MAA.

Tim Smit, Chief Executive and co-founder of the Eden Project, addressed the conference. His was refreshing, open and inspiring. He spoke with experience and encouraged councils to think big, be bold and create opportunities. His own hugely successful and extraordinary hybrid project, to use as an example, has demonstrated just how well partners can deliver together. His aim is to work with partners to deliver a sustainable project to improve economic and social health.

The buzz word continues: DON'T BE SHY, TAKE YOUR PARTNERS!

Cllr. Mrs Joanne Beavis.

Cabinet Member for Community Support and Engagement.

### **LGA Conference – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008. WHAT ARE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS?**

Local Area Agreements (LAA) are about improving local services and increasing economic prosperity for local people. They are three-year agreements with priorities agreed between all the main public sector agencies working in the area and with central government. Partners are brought together under the umbrella of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which agrees a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for its area. The SCS is a long-term strategy for the local area based on consultation with local people about the sort of place they want the area to be. The LAA is based on the objectives in the SCS and translates these into targets to secure the improvements local people want to see.

By June 2008, all local areas will have to agree a new LAA with their Government Office through their LSP. In two tier areas, the county council is the lead authority for the LAA, but district councils must be involved at all stages. This represents a major challenge for elected members, council officers and local and national partners.

When established, LAAs have two functions, to reduce central regulation and to enable local solutions to strengthen partnership working, enhance efficiency and enable community leadership by councils. However, their real value is in tackling important local problems, such as crime and public health, which require all relevant agencies to work together to deliver better outcomes for local people – the very thing that most ward members are concerned about. Set up properly and operated efficiently, LAAs have the potential to transform public services and other community activity that is essential for ensuring sustainable communities.

LAAs and strengthened LSPs are seen as the primary way of delivering a new 'LOCALISM' where central government offers a stronger role for local

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authorities to lead their communities, shape their areas and respond to local needs in exchange for:

More bottom-up accountability.

Stronger local authority leadership.

Better and more efficient services.

Tougher intervention when things go wrong.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Ward members have a crucial role to play as community leaders in influencing, supporting and scrutinising LAAs and LSPs. This includes:

Acting as the face of the council by being highly visible and accountable to their communities and representing community views.

Helping to create and sustain local partnerships at neighbourhood level.

Speaking freely as advocates for their area to influence council and LSP decisions.

Keeping in touch with constituents and identifying issues, complaints and concerns which may warrant further or wider scrutiny.

Cllr. Mrs Joanne Beavis.  
Cabinet Member for Community Support and Engagement.

AREA: All

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: **Help People to Feel Safe and Well**

SUBJECT: London 2012 Pre Games Training Camp Guide	CONTACT OFFICERS: Mark Aldous / Russell Everard
TEL/EMAIL No: x 2323 / x 2582	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
INFORMATION: District set to host Olympic athletes	
Olympic athletes look set to be training in the Braintree District ahead of the 2012 London games. The Braintree District Pre Games Training Camp Consortium is celebrating after learning three of its facilities have made it into the official London Organising Committee Pre-Games Training Guide. Additionally The Essex Golf and Country Club has been recognised as a support facility, offering accommodation.	

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## MEMBERS' FOCUS

Braintree Leisure Centre for Athletics, Unex Towerlands for Equestrian and The Felsted Schools for Archery, have all made the official guide, which will be issued to teams at the conclusion of The Beijing Games. Teams and individual athletes will use the guide to help them choose which facilities they use to prepare themselves for London 2012.

Councillor Tim Wilkinson, chair of the Braintree District London 2012 Cabinet Working Group, said: "We're thrilled about the announcement as it opens up the possibility for Braintree to play a key part in the London 2012 Olympics."

Mark Aldous, Braintree District Council's Sports Development Officer, added:

"This is the culmination of a lot of hard work that has gone on behind the scenes and recognition of the fantastic facilities that the Braintree district has to offer."

Michele Thornton, General Manager at Unex Towerlands, says 'We are delighted to have been chosen as an Olympic 2012 training camp for equestrian sports.

We are ideally positioned to assist with the Olympic preparation of equestrian teams as we regularly host international level competitions and are also to be the quarantine training camp for the British show jump team prior to flying out to this years Beijing Olympics. It is fantastic to have the opportunity to be actively involved in an event as prestigious as The Olympic Games and to know we can fully utilise our state-of-the-art facilities'.

The Felsted Schools Headmaster, Stephen Roberts, commented 'We are delighted to be included in the Guide and we welcome any visiting teams to The Felsted Schools. We will work closely with any team to provide the best environment they require to prepare them for their Olympic events. Felsted has exceptional facilities for training athletes, including a modern multipurpose gym, indoor sports halls, a medical centre, high quality catering facilities, modern and secure accommodation and numerous meeting rooms.

It will be a fine example for our pupils to experience first hand what is required by athletes to compete at this level'. John Martin, General Manager of The Essex, says that being a support facility for London 2012 is important recognition for the club and its partners in the Braintree District Community. Any official association in the run up to this once in a lifetime occasion can only benefit the recognised business providers, and the public in their local communities.

As such, we look forward to accommodating such a prestigious event and the positive spin offs associated with it. DC Leisure as operators of the Braintree Leisure Centre on behalf of Braintree District Council, are delighted that the newly refurbished track facilities have been included within the London 2012 Olympic training guide. DC Leisure look forward to working with partners in offering these fantastic Athletics track facilities. News on which facilities will appear in the official Paralympic guide will be announced later this month.

# MEMBERS' FOCUS

## MID ESSEX PRIMARY CARE TRUST

### Board Meetings 2008

28 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	9.30am	Marconi Room, Civic Centre, CHELMSFORD
30 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	9.30am	Council Chamber, MALDON
24 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	9.30am	Room 1, Causeway House BRAINTREE
26 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	9.30am	Marconi Room, Civic Centre, CHELMSFORD

A hard copy of the Board's papers will be placed in the Members' Room.

Further information can be found at [www.midessexpct.nhs.uk](http://www.midessexpct.nhs.uk)

### AREA: Finance

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: **Housing & Council Tax Benefit**

SUBJECT: <b>Local Housing Allowance -</b> New Housing Benefit Applications from 7th April 2008	CONTACT OFFICER: <b>Juli Rigby</b> <b>Benefits</b> <b>Manager</b>
TEL/EMAIL No.: <b>julri@braintree.gov.uk</b>	BACKGROUND PAPERS: <b>Local Housing Allowance- A Guide</b> <b>for Local Authorities</b>
INFORMATION: With effect from 7th April 2008, all <b>new</b> applications for Housing Benefit in respect of Privately Rented Accommodation will be processed under the new <b>Local Housing Allowance (LHA)</b> scheme.  LHA has been rolling out throughout the Country for the past three years'; this will apply to Braintree as from April 2008.  LHA's are still means tested, but unlike the current Rent Allowance (Housing Benefit) paid to private tenants, it pay's a single weekly flat rate of housing benefit, according to the Household size.  The rate is set by the Rent Service on a monthly basis, and is based on several factors, accommodation needs, access to facilities, education catchments areas, etc.	

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## MEMBERS' FOCUS

Within the pilot authorities currently running LHA, this has in some cases, resulted in the claimant receiving substantially more benefit per week, (because it is an average for the area) than they are actually liable to pay to their landlord. They are currently entitled to keep the excess paid. However, the scheme to be introduced in April 2008 will include a cap of £15.00 per week, to address this issue.

Where the LHA payable to a claimant is **lower** than the weekly rent charged there is no right of appeal to the Rent Service against the shortfall, which will have to be paid by the claimant.

This may result in an increase in the amount of Discretionary Housing Payments given by the Benefits Section from 7/4/2008 onwards, where severe hardship applies to a claimant for any reason. This would then affect the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim, as all DHP expenditure would then fall on this authority, where payments exceed the current funding level of £24.5k.

Those claimants who are in receipt of Rent Allowance (Housing Benefit) **prior** to 7<sup>th</sup> April 2008, with ongoing benefit, will not transfer onto the LHA scheme immediately, until they have a break in entitlement of a week or more.

The Governments' expectation is that the scheme will make it easier for claimants and landlords to establish in advance, how much rent Housing Benefit could cover.

It is anticipated that this scheme will also increase the ability of benefit claimants to "shop around" for the best deal.

All payments of housing benefit will be made directly to the claimant, and not the landlord, giving claimants greater responsibility for their own well being.

There will be arrangements in place to review this where the claimant is vulnerable.

This will have no effect on Council Tax benefit.

A Landlord Forum was held at The Institute, Braintree in November 2007 for Landlords within our area, and letters have also been sent to all Landlords and claimants, to inform them of these changes.

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

AREA: Leisure

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Walking

SUBJECT: Walking Update	CONTACT OFFICER: Tony MacDonald
TEL/EMAIL No.: Ext 2909	BACKGROUND PAPERS: N/A
INFORMATION:  The first two months of 2008 have seen an increase in the amount of walking in the district.  January saw a record number of walkers for the Heart and Sole scheme with 13 walkers turning up for the Witham walk on the 29 <sup>th</sup> . This is down to our volunteer walk leaders encouraging people to come along and have an enjoyable healthy stroll in the locality. We still need more walkers so we are spreading the word. The scheme has been running for just over a year.  Three records were broken during February 2008 on the longer established Walking for Wellbeing scheme. The number of walkers averaged out at 46 per walk. This was due to a record number for a short walk on the 12 <sup>th</sup> of 42 attendees who walked three miles around Braintree and Lotte (the originator of the scheme all those years back) led 67 brave souls for 4 ½ miles from Dorewards Hall. Last year's average of 34 per walk was 22% up on 2006 and the average is already slightly up in 2008.	

AREA: Environment

CORPORATE THEME HEADING: Caring for the Environment

SUBJECT: Waste Disposal/Recycling	CONTACT OFFICER: Garry Philp
TEL/EMAIL :No.Ext 2228 garph@braintree.gov.uk	BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
INFORMATION:  <b>Vigilant public help catch flytipper</b>  The Environmental Protection Department of Braintree District Council has successfully prosecuted a fly-tipper who dumped waste twice on the same day.  On the 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2007 the Council received a report from the Environment Agency that there had been a fly-tip of wood, cardboard and televisions on the	

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## MEMBERS' FOCUS

road between Sible Hedingham and Great Maplestead.

Also on the same day another complaint was received from 2 members of the public stating that there was a fly tip at Mallows Lane, Sible Hedingham. Officers then investigated and found waste consisting of wood, cardboard, electrical equipment and even paperwork relating to financial details of employees and customers of a local estate agent.

Further investigation established that the waste at both fly-tips had been removed from a property that Michael Simpson, a local estate agent had sold in Braintree in two separate loads. He then dumped the waste in Mallows Lane as he did not have time to go to the tip. He then returned to the property and removed the second load of waste, which was then dumped in Sible Hedingham.

Michael Simpson was reported for 2 offences under the Environment Protection Act 1990, each of which carries a fine not exceeding £20,000 and/or 6 months in prison on summary conviction in a magistrate's court.

In court in the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Michael Simpson pleaded guilty to both offences. The Magistrates after consideration imposed a fine of £150 for the first offence, £250 for the second offence, a victim fee of £15 and costs of £350. In summing up the magistrates also pointed out to Mr Simpson that the could also take away his driving licence.

## News

### Business views wanted

Businesses are being asked to play a part in shaping the economic future of the Braintree district.

Braintree District Council is launching a comprehensive survey of businesses as part of its consultation process for the district's next economic development strategy.

The survey will seek the views of 500 businesses, from sole traders to major employers, on the key issues and challenges which they see as important to the long term growth and sustainability of their business or enterprise.

Recruitment, workforce skills, the district's image, environmental issues and barriers to growth are among the topics covered in the survey. Some

## MEMBERS' FOCUS

questions will focus specifically on the challenges faced by businesses in rural locations.

Results from the survey will be used to inform the district's economic development strategy which will be in place between 2008 and 2012. Further consultation with the district's Business Council, Economic Partnership Board, business groups, partners and other stakeholders will be carried out between April and November.

Councillor Nigel Harley, cabinet member for enterprise and infrastructure said: "I would encourage all businesses to take part in what is probably the biggest business survey of its kind ever carried out in this district. Information from the survey will be the most important piece of evidence we need to support the district's ambitious plans for growth in jobs, and continued economic prosperity for our communities."

ENDS

For further information, contact Russell Everard, Head of Economic Development,  
Braintree District Council, on 01376 551414.

## News

### Something for everyone in craft exhibition

There is something for everyone at The Town Hall Centre Art Gallery in Braintree. The gallery is once again hosting an Exhibition of designer crafts by The Essex Craft Society.

The varied displays include ceramics, calligraphy, furniture, prints, textiles and stained glass so there is something for everyone. Some of the work is for sale and commissions will be taken. The Group has shown in the Gallery before and their work is much admired by visitors to the exhibition.

The Exhibition runs until the 26th April (closed on Thursday 17th) and entrance to the Gallery is **free**. The Gallery is open 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays.

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For more press information or enquiries contact Braintree Cultural Services on 01376 325266 or The Town Hall Centre on 01376 557776.

Issued by Braintree DC PR 7 April 2008.

## News

### Earls Colne renewed play area to open

**On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April from 10am**, a completely renewed play area will open in Earls Colne, for children aged 2 – 12 years. £50,000 worth of new swings, roundabout, slide, climbing frame, benches and bins have been installed with new paths, fences and gates. The new area is on Hillie Bunnies, off Burrows Road, Earls Colne: and complies with DDA and latest play and surfacing standards.

**Councillor Wendy Schmitt**, cabinet member for public protection and healthy living, said: "Play areas are so important to give children somewhere they can have fun and get active at the same time. It is equally important that their parents know it is a safe environment for them and this has been a high priority in the design of the refurbished play areas.

"Nearby residents are always consulted to ensure that the new equipment is in the right place and caters for the right age group."

Visiting children will have the chance to enter a free draw for a £50 Nike voucher, courtesy of Nike at Braintree Freeport.

**This is the first of six play areas** to be renewed this year, at an overall cost of £240,000.

**Photographs** will be available early the following week.

For more press information or enquiries contact Alvin Mann, 01376 332314 or Chris Trim (01376) 557752

Issued by Braintree DC PR 16 April 2008.

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## News

### Poles get their own paper

The first local Polish newspaper for Essex is being launched by a young Pole living in Braintree. Stanislaw Forczek, 21, started his publishing venture in September 2007 when he and other Polish people launched a newspaper called Braintree.pl. After just two issues Stan was the only one who wanted to continue the enterprise.

Determined to make a success of the project he got in touch with Braintree District Council's Business Development Services where he was given professional advice. He was also referred to the Princes Trust charity, which supports young people setting up businesses. The Trust's panel liked Stan's ideas very much and decided to support him with a grant of £3,500 – not far short of the maximum of £4,000.

So now, under the new name of Nasze Essex (Our Essex) and with a proper business plan and finances, Stan is preparing the first issue which will be launched in April. The paper, starting with a run of 15,000 copies, will be free and distributed all over Essex. There will also be copies in libraries across the county.

Despite a formidable workload, including studying performing arts at Braintree College, working shifts in Tesco at Great Notley, and helping with theatre and community groups, Stan has been busy doing his research into the project. This showed a large population of potential readers and an excitement at having their own paper among the Polish community. Two of those living in Braintree sum up the general feeling about the new publication. "We are so happy we will have a local newspaper which will not only provide general information about living in the UK but also introduce us to local facilities and events," said Grazyna Kwiatkowska.

Added Ewelina Zjawiony: "My command of English is very good. I study at Braintree College, and read English literature so English language is all the time around me. It would be really nice to have something to read in my own language."

Councillor Wendy Schmitt, cabinet member for public protection and health, said: "The commitment and hard work Stan has shown in launching this newspaper is a demonstration of what members of the migrant community can contribute. Issues such as recycling collections, which do not happen in Poland, can be explained, as well as information about schooling and driving, where there are also variations between the two countries. It will also be a way for organisations and businesses to reach the Polish community."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Stan is willing to be interviewed about this venture and can be contacted on 07515 806232. Visit the website address at [www.nasze-essex.co.uk](http://www.nasze-essex.co.uk)

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For more press information or enquiries contact Anna Szwagiel on 01376 551414.

Issued by Braintree DC PR 4 March 2008.

## News

### Three local charities benefit from Chairman's fund

**Prior to the full council meeting** on Monday evening, three local charities will receive a record share of this year's Chairman's charity fund: raised through generous sponsorship from local companies, a record-breaking golf day, staff contributions, raffles, a donation from Braintree Bowls Club, and other miscellaneous donations.

**Charity representatives** will meet Chairman Councillor Lady Patricia Newton at 6.30pm, when they will be **available for photographs**. The cheque amounts are significantly more than in previous years and Chairman will announce the details at the start of the council meeting. The charities and their representatives are:

Braintree Crossroads: **Teri Smith and Maggie Unwin**

Coggeshall Prentice Youth Work Trust: **Hannah Cooper and 2 young people**

Twinstead Riding for the Disabled: **Joan Glen-Martin**

The Chairman thanked the many people in local organisations who have helped to raise the record £5,000 for each of the three charities.

- Chairman's Charity Golf Day at Braintree Golf Club: raised £9,024.03
- Council staff restaurant Christmas Raffle: raised £105
- Council Easter Egg Raffle raised £136
- Council casual dress days raised over £300
- Braintree Leisure Pairs (carpet bowls) raised £700

For more press information or enquiries contact Donna Walton or Angela Whybrew, 01376 551414 – just say the name.

Issued by Braintree DC PR 9 April 2008.

## CHAIRMAN'S CHARITIES FOR CIVIC YEAR 2007-2008

### **BRAINTREE AND DISTRICT CROSSROADS YOUNG CARERS – CHARITY NO. 1059393**

Young Carers is a charity which is funded by the Crossroads charity. Young Carers is a support group for children between the age of 8 and 18 who care for

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somebody in their family such as a sibling or mother/father. There is a fortnightly support group where the children come to get a break from their caring role. They also do some one to one weekly meets with any young carers who may be having a particularly hard time and are in need of additional support. The money donated to this group will be used to provide days out for the young carers: something many of these children otherwise miss.

### **COGGESHALL PRENTICE YOUTH WORK TRUST – CHARITY NO. 1114176**

Coggeshall Prentice Youth Work Trust was established as an independent charity in 2006. The main objective of the Trustees, drawn from a wide variety of the community, is to develop youth work in the schools, community and local area in order to provide local teenagers with safe activities which they will find interesting, absorbing and entertaining, and through which they can learn about life, citizenship and the Christian faith. The Trust has employed an experienced and trained full-time youth worker, Hannah Matthews, who liaises closely with schools, Parish Council and other organisations. Three different youth clubs operate for different ages and needs, and are laying the foundations to start an additional café-style youth club for older teenagers. The Trust needs to raise sufficient funding to sustain this vital work in the community.

### **TWINSTEAD RIDING FOR THE DISABLED – CHARITY NO. 1073684**

The group has been running for 26 years and now offers 6 rides per week to riders from across the Braintree District. The riders' ages range from 10 to 62 and they have a variety of physical and learning difficulties. Each rider needs up to 3 people to support them and the group relies on its unpaid helpers to fill this role. All running costs have to be raised by the group and include the upkeep of horses, vets and insurance costs and hire of additional ponies and facilities. If you are interested in helping please telephone Joan Glen-Martin, 0845 4506929.

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## News

### District set to host Olympic athletes

Olympic athletes look set to be training in the Braintree district ahead of the 2012 London games.

The Braintree District Pre Games Training Camp Consortium is celebrating after learning three of its facilities have made it into the official London organising committee pre-games training guide. Although not in the guide, the Essex Golf and Country Club in Earls Colne has been recognised as a support facility, offering accommodation.

Braintree Leisure Centre, hosting athletics, Unex Towerlands, equestrian, and The Felsted Schools, archery, have all made the official guide, which will be published at the Beijing games. Teams and individual athletes will use the guide to help them choose which facilities they use to prepare themselves for London 2012.

Councillor Tim Wilkinson, chair of the Braintree District London 2012 Cabinet Working Group, said: "We're thrilled about the announcement as it opens up the possibility for Braintree to play a key part in the London 2012 Olympics."

Mark Aldous, Braintree District Council's sports development officer, added: "This is the culmination of a lot of hard work that has gone on behind the scenes and recognition of the fantastic facilities that the Braintree district has to offer."

News on which facilities will appear in the official Paralympic guide will be announced later this month.

For more press information or enquiries contact Mark Aldous 01376 551414.

Issued by Braintree DC PR 4 March 2008.

## News

### Journeys top 50,000

In just six years the number of journeys delivered by Braintree Community Transport has doubled.

Back in 2002 passenger journeys totalled 24,969; last year that number had shot up to 50010.

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The service is operated and managed by Braintree District Council and relies on a band of around 50 volunteer drivers. Other volunteers use their own cars to help those with restricted mobility, a disability or who are rurally isolated.

The scheme enables people who cannot use conventional transport to get to appointments, do their shopping and to enjoy social events.

They are passengers like Mrs Maria Wadsworth, from Chapel Hill in Braintree, who became the 50,000<sup>th</sup> person to use the service last year when she was picked up by volunteer driver Eric Mackintosh.

Mrs Wadsworth, who is in her eighties, relies on it for trips to the hairdresser and shopping.

She said: "I really value and appreciate the service and the drivers are always so kind and helpful. I don't know how I'd manage without it."

Councillor Nigel Harley, cabinet member for enterprise and infrastructure, said: "Mrs Wadsworth is typical of many who find community transport invaluable. The ever-increasing demand shows just what a lifeline it is to so many people across our district.

"And it is only possible through the dedicated band of volunteer drivers who deserve our thanks."

For more press information or enquiries contact Tracey Corcoran on 01376 551414.

Issued by Braintree DC PR February 2008.

## News

### Combat Climate Change with Real Nappies

**Braintree District Council** will be supporting the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Real Nappy Week from April 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> by promoting the use of real nappies and offering advice to parents on how to apply for subsidised nappy packs. The Nappy Talk roadshow will visit the three towns in the District:-

**Halstead Hospital mother & baby clinic -Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2pm – 4pm**

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**Witham Health Centre mother & baby clinic -Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 9am to 11.30am**

**George Yard, Braintree Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 9am to 5pm**

This year the promotional week, co-ordinated by the National Real Nappy Campaign, will concentrate how parents can help to combat climate change by using Real Nappies. The message is clear, providing parents follow simple guidelines when using real nappies, there can be significant gains for the environment both in reduced greenhouse gases and household waste sent to landfill or incineration.

**Environment portfolio holder, Cllr Roger Walters said,** "Each day in Essex a staggering 340,000 disposable nappies are thrown away, that's around 124 million each year weighing nearly 25,000 tonnes. Most of them are sent to landfill where they generate methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. By switching to real nappies and following the simple guidelines, parents can help protect the environment."

**Sally Gordon, spokesperson for the Real Nappy Campaign said:** "We are delighted to be able to reassure parents that by using washable nappies they can reduce their impact on global warming and energy use as we are aware that these are key issues for families. In addition Real Nappy Week gives us the opportunity to promote the additional benefits of nappies including their cost savings, natural fabrics and the choice they represent for parents."

Organisations across the country will be joining together to celebrate the week with hundreds of events such as fashion shows, nappicino coffee mornings and teddy toddles. The event will be supported by national brands such as Mothercare and John Lewis and local retailers across the country.

ENDS

For more press information or enquiries contact Tania Roberge, 01376 551414

To find out more about Real Nappy Week or the Real Nappy Campaign contact Rebecca Rapson, Real Nappy Campaign, 0845 850 0606.

## Notes

1. An Environment Agency report, in 2005, looked at the relative environmental impacts of both real nappies and disposables. The report confirmed that parents using real nappies are able to save waste. In addition the report indicated that if parents were to follow

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guidelines recommended by the Real Nappy Campaign and manufacturers their global warming impact would be less than when using disposables. 'The report's overall conclusion that there is little overall difference in the environmental impact of real nappies and disposables was based on the report's estimates of the behaviour of a sample of real nappy users. Criticism of the validity of the sample used for this purpose led to an announcement by the Environment Agency that a further report would be produced to show the impact of a range of behaviours including following the recommendations endorsed by the Real Nappy Campaign, WEN and the nappy manufacturers for the use of real nappies. This report is expected to be published shortly.

2. Energy use: Parents are recommended to wash soiled nappies in full loads at 6<sup>00</sup>C using low energy rated washing machines, allowing them to dry naturally wherever possible. Washable nappies do not need to be soaked prior to washing and do not need ironing.
3. Cost: Home laundered nappies could save parents up to £500 on the cost of keeping a baby in nappies.
4. Waste: Nearly three billion disposable nappies are thrown away in the UK every year creating over 690,000 tons of nappy waste.
5. The Real Nappy Campaign is a not-for-profit company administered by Rezolve Kernow with initial membership from LARAC, Rezolve Kernow, the Nappy Alliance, WEN and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme).

**LARAC** is the Local Authority Advisory Committee which represents local authority recycling officers within the UK.

**ReZolve Kernow** is a not for profit organisation encouraging sustainability, with a focus on waste and material resource use.

[www.rezolve.org.uk](http://www.rezolve.org.uk)

**Women's Environmental Network** is the only organisation in the UK working consistently for women and the environment. [www.wen.org.uk](http://www.wen.org.uk)

**WRAP** works in partnership to encourage and enable businesses and consumers to be more efficient in their use of materials and recycle more things more often. This helps to minimise landfill, reduce carbon emissions and improve our environment. [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

Issued by Braintree DC PR 14 April 2008.