



Summer 2008



BDC Chairman Councillor Lady Patricia Newton and Councillor Jo Beavis at the launch of the new Community Achievement Awards (see page 9)

Summer will soon be over and most of us have enjoyed attending festivals and fetes throughout the district. If you're already thinking about planning your next event, there's a useful link on the back page of this newsletter, to the Home Office Good Practice Safety Guide.

Please contact our Tourism Office if you wish to publicise the dates of your events to the wider community through the BDC website – contact:

Marie Orpe, Tourism Manager, Tel: 01376 550066; or Email: tic@braintree.gov.uk.

We've said goodbye to a few friends this summer as a number of parish clerks have retired and sadly Sheila Stubbs from Panfield has died. Sheila will be very much missed at the Clerks' Network on 10th September.

Contact details for all Clerks can be found at www.braintree.gov.uk – Council and Democracy – Parish Information.

Editor

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Congratulations to our parishes!

Village of the Year Competition - Great Bardfield - 2nd Prize winners in the Calor Essex Village of the year competition and Steeple Bumpstead, Class 3 Runners up in the Best Kept Village competition. Merit awards went to Great Bardfield and Earls Colne.

Prizewinners in the Best Churchyard section included St Peter AD Vincula, Coggeshall and St Mary & St Christopher, Panfield, with St Mary & St Christopher, Panfield being highly commended.

Congratulations to Cllr Jack Prime (Rivenhall) – awarded an MBE for services undertaken for his work with Customs and Revenue over many years.





Coming Soon

Clerks' Network Meeting – 10th September - agenda on the way.

Witham International Puppet Festival – Saturday 20th September (see page 11 for more details)



Parish Council Event – autumn 2008 (date to be confirmed)

An update for local councils and other stakeholders on Greenfields progress - includes the new Community Fund, progress on the Decent Homes work, Community Options Studies, Greenfields membership scheme. Contact Karen O'Connor, Tel: 01376 567317 Email: Karen.O'Connor@GreenfieldsCH.org.uk.

BDC - Parish Event at Causeway House – 19th March 2009

Please make a note of the above date – more information on the evening's itinerary to follow later in the year with invitations.

Rural Community Council of Essex

The Rural Community Council of Essex invites you to attend any (or all) of the following events to be held at RCCE offices in Feering:

Tuesday 19th August "Consulting your Community" information evening.

Tuesday 16th September "Managing your Project" training session.

Wednesday 8th October "Creating your Community-led Plan" workshop.

Tuesday 18th November "Taking Actions Forward" information afternoon.

Monday 15th December "Christmas Coffee Morning" advice session.

Booking is required for all events. Fee - £25 per person - member parishes and £50 - non-members (except Christmas Coffee Morning which is £15 / £30). Information and booking form is available on RCCE website www.essexrcc.org.uk or contact Stella Meesters on 0844 4773938 or email stella.meesters@essexrcc.org.uk

RCCE Village Halls Conference - Saturday 18th October - venue and programme to be confirmed - further details contact Sue Sheppard on 0844 4773938 or email sue.sheppard@essexrcc.org.uk

Community Money Marketplace – 2nd October 2008

If you're looking for funding for projects, Hylands House Chelmsford is the place to be on 2nd October! There will be free seminars, information and exhibition rooms featuring local regional and national 'funders' in the stunning venue of Hylands House. It will be a wonderful day out providing you with ideas and information to help fund local projects. Hylands House can be accessed by bus from Chelmsford, alternatively there's ample free parking.

To take advantage of one of the free seminars you should pre-book your place (first come first served) - on-line booking facility: www.communitymoney.uk.com <<http://www.communitymoney.uk.com>>.

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If you don't have internet access please contact Voluntary Sector Training on 01371 876747 to reserve your place(s).

This event is organised jointly by Essex local authorities, including Braintree District Council and Councils for Voluntary Service. Don't miss it and we hope to see you all there!

Parks and Open Spaces

Halstead Public Gardens – Awarded Green Flag



Halstead Public Gardens are among the record 742 green spaces across the country, all freely accessible to the public, which have received a Green Flag Award - the national standard for quality parks and green spaces.



Halstead Public Gardens

The Gardens have also been awarded Green Heritage Site accreditation for 2008/09, an award which recognises the local historic importance. Over the years many individuals and local organisations such as Friends of Halstead Public Gardens, Halstead Town Council and the River Colne Countryside Project have given their time and support to the council teams.

District Development – Witham Public Park – Oral History Project

In the March issue of this newsletter, we reported on a bid for funding to develop an oral history project for Witham Public Park. Braintree Council has now obtained funding from Essex County Council's Mid Essex Forum to start Phase 1 of the Project in 2008/09. The plan is to:

- Employ a project manager/trainer experienced in making and using oral history records
- Record 20 interviews to capture memories of the park
- Find up to 5 volunteers to be trained to record memories
- Purchase recording equipment and pay volunteers' expenses



Witham Carnival '1939'

We are also keen to collect copies of photographs taken in the park to support the work.

For more information and/or to volunteer please contact Jenny Claydon on 01376 551414 Ext 2565 or Email:

Jenny.Claydon@braintree.gov.uk



Landscape Services

Veteran Tree Hunt Competition - Braintree Wildlife Advisory Group has launched the Braintree District Veteran Tree Hunt Competition. The competition will run until the 8th November 2008 and aims to find the tallest, oldest or widest tree in the district.

The competition is a great way to get out into the countryside and hunt down veteran trees but also allows us to make a record of all the veteran trees in the district. The information gathered will feed into the Woodland Trusts national survey to find ancient or veteran trees all over the country.

To take part in the competition, the Veteran Tree Hunt Leaflet is available at www.braintree.gov.uk/Braintree/environment/landscape or from Causeway House.

Breathing Places Grant Success - The Landscape Services team by working in partnership with Black Notley Parish Council to create a new green open space for the village, have successfully applied to Breathing Places Big Lottery Fund. The £10,000 grant will be used to fund tree planting, new footpath, interpretation and mowing equipment.

Local Nature Reserve Designation - Following the designation of two new Local Nature Reserves at Cuckoo Wood, Great Notley and Bocking Blackwater the Landscape Services team are working towards designating a further local nature reserve. This reserve location is proposed just up from Bocking Blackwater on the Marks Farm development.



Halstead - As part of an on-going programme of events within the Public Gardens, Park Preschool, Holy Trinity Nursery and Halstead Brownies took part in activities looking at the plants and wildlife within the gardens. The programme continues and further activities will be run each term, themed around the season.

Elsewhere in Halstead a walk was held on Nether Court Open Space looking at the management plan and how it will benefit both wildlife and public access over the coming years.

Sible Hedingham - Work continues towards the creation of the River Walk. Paths have been cleared of nettles and other rampant growth to maintain access. There have been discussions with Essex County Council over the siting of a footbridge adjacent to Alderford Mill, which it is hoped will allow access onto the walk at that point.

The Project is also working with Hedingham School's Rural Studies Unit to propagate elms from cutting material obtained from the few surviving mature elms within the district.



PARISH UPDATE



Braintree District Council's Town and Parish Council Newsletter

August 08

White Colne - The Project Officer led a bat walk along the river, starting at 8.30pm and finishing after 10pm, with an abundance of bats appearing from around 9.30pm onwards. Several species were detected using a hand-held bat detector, able to pick up inaudible bat calls and emit them at a frequency human ears can detect.

Within the Colne Valley - All 11 barn owl boxes erected by the Project have now been inspected. By far the most common inhabitants were stock doves, but one is home to a nesting barn owl, whilst another is full of owl pellets, showing that it is well used.



Further barn owl boxes will hopefully be erected in the near future, helping to encourage this bird back.

Operations - Street Scene

Community Wardens – New Warden

You've probably already met Tony Howland, the new Community Warden for the north of the district already as he joined Braintree Council in June.



Tony Howland

Tony and his wife have moved into the district after living and running a business in France for a number of years. He's very keen to get to know the area and looking forward to becoming involved with the local community. His wealth of experience, calm manner and positive attitude will go a long way in helping to achieve community cohesion.

Contact Tony on mobile 07770 542591 (not for public use) or email tonho@braintree.gov.uk (Stour Valley North/Yeldham/Upper Colne/Bumpsteads)

For more information on the Community Warden Service please phone Trevor Lawrence, Community Warden Supervisor, 007785 515521 (not for public use) or email Trevor.Lawrence@braintree.gov.uk

BT Payphone Realignment Update

In April 2008 BT launched a consultation on the future of phone boxes within the District. Braintree District Council has made representations on a number of these boxes arguing for their retention on the basis of social need. We will also be seeking to 'List' a number of the older K6 "Red Phone box" where they have a positive contribution to the local area. BDC are currently awaiting a response from BT.

For further information contact Alan Massow, Senior Policy Planner
Tel: 01376 551414 or
Email: Alan.Massow@braintree.gov.uk



Law and Governance – Local Committees

Since the introduction of the three local committees, many successful grant applications have been made through these for local projects. Guidelines on how to apply can be found on the website at www.braintree.gov.uk – click on Council and Democracy, then Going Local. Guidelines and application forms can be found in the 'Useful Links' column on the right hand side of the page.

Contact your Area Coordinator for further information and meeting dates – on 01376 551414 – Kitty Barrett (Braintree) Linda Morgan (Halstead) or David Triggs (Witham).

The following are details of just a few of the grants awarded so far:

Refurbishment of Great Bardfield Playground - Great Bardfield has been awarded a grant for £2465 towards the refurbishment of the playground. This enabled them to clear, replace and repair equipment and fences to the play area and refill with new play bark plus additional improvements and refurbishment.



Great Bardfield Playground

Coggeshall - Prentice Youth Work Trust - Braintree Local Committee have awarded Coggeshall Youth Prentice Trust with funding of £6700 to cover one year's part salary for a youth worker to establish a new youth group in Coggeshall for those aged 11 - 13.

Grounds Keeping Equipment - Rayne Parish Council has been awarded a grant of £2626 to purchase a brush cutter, hedge-trimmer and a flail mower to attach to their tractor. This equipment will enable them to maintain the open areas in their parish to the standard required and make best use of the tractor.

Coggeshall Village Hall Kitchen Facilities - A grant of £1868 was awarded to Coggeshall Parish Council to purchase a dishwasher and a hot water boiler for the village hall kitchen. It was the final part of a larger project to improve the village hall and its facilities for existing users and to help to attract new business.

Little Elms Pre-School – The Committee awarded just over £1500 to the Pre-School to meet the additional costs it had incurred following closure of Rickstones Pavilion and its urgent relocation to Spring Lodge.

Further information on committee dates, all BDC Services, Parish Cluster meetings, Tourism, etc., go to www.braintree.gov.uk (for parish information pages, click on Council and Democracy, Parish Information).



Hatfield Peverel Parish Council Community Speedwatch - The Parish Council was awarded £5000 for the purchase and installation of Solar Powered Traffic Speed Measuring Equipment.

Witham in Bloom – £3500 has been awarded to Witham in Bloom for additional floral displays at two District Council car parks - Mill Lane and Newlands Street.



Councillors Tom Foster (Chairman of the Witham Local Committee) and Janet Money handing over a cheque to Annie Northland from Witham in Bloom

Feering Parish Council – £500 was granted to Feering Parish Council for the purchase of eight 3m by 3m pop up gazebos with side curtains for sun/rain weather protection for outdoor community events.

Witham Memorial Garden – A grant was awarded for modifications to the hard-standing in front of the war memorial at Witham Memorial Gardens to safely accommodate additional standard bearers during Remembrance Sunday and on other special occasions. These were proposed by the Witham Branch of the Royal British Legion and cost £3500.

Earls Colne Parish Council was awarded £890 for planters, plants and soil to further improve an untidy area of land in the centre of Earls Colne. In the past the area was often muddy and full of puddles and was frequently used as an unofficial display area for vehicles for sale.



Planters – Earls Colne

The land, in Halstead Road, had recently benefited from the creation of an attractive new parking area via a partnership between the Parish Council and Essex County Council. The new planters contain trees, under-planted with spring bulbs and geraniums, on the cobbled area at the rear of the site.

Pam Herbert, the Parish Clerk, wrote “We have received many complimentary comments about the planting scheme and about how much it has improved this central area of the village.”

Earls Colne Primary School has been awarded £15,000 for half the refurbishment cost of the swimming pool.



Environmental Health

'Fly-tipping – Don't turn a blind eye'

During June and July, Braintree District Council embarked on a campaign to reduce fly-tipping in the district and all parish councils will have received a copy of the poster shown below from our Environmental Promotions Team.

Each reported fly-tipping site was surrounded with Braintree District Council branded tape depicting a 'scene of crime' with a board placed at the scene requesting information.



The purpose of the campaign is to reinforce that fly-tipping is a crime and to encourage the public to come forward with information which could ultimately reduce the number of fly-tips in the district.

Environmental Prosecutions

Braintree District Council's Dog Warden Service has successfully taken action against a dog owner who allowed his dog to continually stray without identification tags.

Despite numerous requests by the Dog Warden for the dog, a Staffordshire bull terrier to be wearing a collar and tag bearing the owners name and address, the owner failed to comply. On previous occasions when the dog was seized it was found to be only wearing a collar. As a result of this the dog was seized and Braintree District Council took action by prosecuting the owner under The Control of Dogs Order 1992.



On the 9th of June 2008, at Chelmsford Magistrates Court, the dog owner, a resident of Braintree, was fined £225 and ordered to pay £350 in costs. He had been found guilty of failing to have an identification tag on his dog when it was seized by the dog wardens after being found straying.

The Environmental Protection Team has also successfully prosecuted a licensee of a wine bar in the Braintree district for failure to comply with the smoke free laws.

A year has now passed since the implementation of the smoke-free laws on 1st July 2007 and there has been a high level of compliance in premises across the Braintree District. However complaints were made of patrons continuing to smoke in a wine bar. At Chelmsford Magistrate's Court on 30th June 2008 a licensee was found guilty under The Health Act 2006 (8)) for the offence of failing to prevent smoking in a smoke-free place.



Braintree District Community Achievement Awards

These Awards recognise and celebrate those who have made an outstanding contribution to the community and to improving the quality of life for others by giving their time, support and care. Nominations can be made for one of the three categories below, to be received by 30th September 2008.

- Young person 11 to 17
- Contribution to the environment and conservation (young person or adult)
- Contribution by any individual to a voluntary body or to the community (18 and over)

Full details of the award scheme can be found at www.braintree.gov.uk and nomination forms can be downloaded or completed on-line. Judging will take place in October with the winners announced before Christmas. The presentation of the awards will take place at the Chairman's civic reception, which will be held on 15th January 2009.

We would be grateful for your help in promoting these awards so that we can recognise and celebrate those people who selflessly make a difference to people in the Braintree District.

Contact: Aurélia Moreaux, Corporate Policy and Communications.
Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2362
Email: Aurélia.Moreaux@braintree.gov.uk

Community Safety - Priority Areas

Following the Crime and Disorder Act Review 2006, Crime and Disorder partnerships are now required to identify priority themes to focus on. From 1st April 2008 legislation changed and new requirements are for Strategic Assessments to be undertaken annually. These are now to include not just crime and disorder data, but also data concerning quality of life issues.

Our Strategic Assessment (SA) and Annual Partnership Plan have been developed with the following mission in mind:

“To take a lead in making the Braintree District even safer and to help people feel safe, by reducing crime and disorder and the related health, economic and social costs of crime”

The following are areas highlighted through the SA and have been agreed as priorities for the Braintree District (not in any particular order):

- Youth Offending and Disorder (Prolific and Priority Offending and Young People as Victims of Crime)
- Anti-Social Behaviour (including Criminal Damage)
- Substance Related Crime and Disorder (Alcohol and Drugs)
- Hate Crime (Racial, Homophobic, Faith Transphobic, Faith Related, Sectarian, Disabilist)
- Domestic Abuse
- Road Safety

Contact Helena Goodwin, Community Safety and Development Manager, Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2756.



Town and Parish News

Great Yeldham – Bowtell’s Meadow

Well done Great Yeldham Parish Council for successfully transforming the Bowtell’s Meadow Play Area into a bright friendly environment for children.



(Chairman of Great Yeldham Parish Council Cllr Mrs Slimming, County Cllr David Finch and Braintree Cllr Nigel McCrea with children from St Andrews C of E Primary School)

There may have been a ‘cloudburst’ during the opening ceremony but this didn’t stop local schoolchildren from enjoying the play equipment.

Sible Hedingham - Stop Stansted Expansion – Public Meeting

On 21st May 2008 representatives from many of the parishes in the north of the district attended a public meeting hosted by Sible Hedingham Parish Council, chaired by Cllr Jo Beavis. Parish Councils in the north of the district had been invited by Sible Hedingham Parish Council. They gathered to hear speakers Brian Ross from the Stop Stansted Campaign, Ashley Cooper, representing the north Braintree parishes and Braintree District Councillor Nigel Harley.

The agenda included BAA’s planning application for a second runway at Stansted and the National Air Traffic Services (‘NATS’) consultation launched on 21 February 2008. This consultation covers proposed changes to the airspace known as Terminal Control North which covers much of East Anglia.

For further information on the campaign go to www.stopstanstedexpansion.com

Flood Alleviation Scheme Opens

Three lagoons have been constructed on existing water courses to store water from surrounding areas to alleviate flooding at Sible Hedingham. The County scheme was designed in consultation with the Environment Agency, Braintree District Council, Sible Hedingham Parish Council and the landowners.



(Left to right – Cllrs Fred Swallow, Ted Snarey, Jo Beavis, Wendy Scattergood and David Finch at the opening ceremony on 18th June)

The scheme was carried out to the latest environmental standards, with excavated earth being re-used on the site.

For more information contact Scott Wilson at Essex County Council Tel: 01245 434383 or email scott.wilson@essex.gov.uk



Castle Hedingham – Junk Swap

In April, Castle Hedingham held the first 'Junk Swap' in the district. It was a bustling, very well attended event and all agreed it was very worthwhile with many attendees suggesting it should be repeated next year. Support was given by Essex Community Reuse and Recycling Network and Braintree District Council Recycling Promotions Team. The Community Warden assisted those arriving with their bags and boxes.



(No, this mobility scooter wasn't for 'swapping' but loaded up with goods to take home!

Amongst the 'junk' there were tables and chairs, a collection of egg cups, a complete fish tank with pump and accessories, children's toys, carpets, books, nursery items and possibly most items to fit out a kitchen! Paint cans, mobile phones and electrical goods were brought along for recycling with charity organizations.

This free, community, re-use and recycling event helped to divert waste from landfill and at the same time benefited local charities.

If your parish council is considering holding a similar event, please contact BDC Recycling Promotions Team on 01376 551414 for further information.

Witham



Our very good wishes go to Witham Town Council who, with help from the Chamber of Trade, Centre Managers, Essex County Council, Essex Police, Braintree District Council and many more supporters, will be taking a leading role in the organisation and running of the annual Puppet Festival. This will take place in the shopping centres and around the town on Saturday 20th September from 10.30 am to 4 pm.

The festival is in its 9th year with acts from America, China, Finland, Holland, Scotland and Wales with the return of Titan the robot.

For further information contact Witham Town Council on 01376 520627 or take a look at the festival website:

www.withaminternationalpuppetfestival.co.uk

Wickham St Paul – New Village Sign



Wickham St Paul Village Sign

Well done to Wickham St Paul PC for their new village sign depicting more than 1000 years of history. The sign is topped by an image of St Paul's Cathedral known for the origins of the parish name. Monks travelling from St Paul's used to pass through the village on their way to Bury St Edmunds.



Village Car Share Scheme

The WOMBAT car club is looking for a village interested in piloting a car share scheme. The scheme will provide vehicles which are accessible 24/7, parked in central locations, can be booked for as little as half an hour to drop the kids off at a friend's, to a couple of hours to do the weekly shop, to an evening out or a long weekend away. All a member has to do is:

- Simply join for an annual membership fee of £60 and receive a swipe card
- Book over the internet any time of day, from as little as half an hour
- Access the car from a dedicated location on a drive or on street bay
- Swipe into the car and drive
- Pay an hourly (usually £3.50 an hour) and per mile (usually 15p) charge that is invoiced monthly

Are you interested? Contact Kris Radley the Rural Community Council of Essex Transport and Access adviser on 0844 477 3938 or email

kris.radley@essexrcc.org.uk

Events – Good Practice Safety Guide – link to page on Home Office website

If your parish council is planning a small event, or sporting event on the highway or in public places and would like to check out how to do this safely, take a look at the following web-page.

<http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/operational-policing/event-safety-guide.pdf>

Police News



Update on Metal Thefts

Central District (Braintree and Chelmsford) have set up a small team (Operation 'canel') to look at the increasing amount of theft of metal and catalytic converters. The team have looked at crime trends/intelligence and interviewed or revisited persons arrested for these types of offences. As part of their investigations, they carried out checks on numerous scrap metal dealerships and ran covert/overt operations.

The operations are currently running and a number of arrests have been made with warrant raids on a few scrap metal sites.

Please could you help by reporting any unusual movements and sightings especially around business premises and school/church buildings? Contact Sgt. Tony Benjamin Tel: 0300 333 4444

Email:

Tony.Benjamin@essex.pnn.police.uk

Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)

Are you new to the parish clerk role? Why not take a look at www.ealc.gov.uk and if you're thinking about training for your job and want to know more about CiLCA - Certificate in Local Council Administration – Contact Alison East - County Training Officer Telephone: 01371 879722 Email: alison.east@ealc.gov.uk

Have you any ideas for future newsletter articles? Contact Linda Hadley
Tel: 01376 551414 Ext: 2343:
or Email: Linda.Hadley@braintree.gov.uk