



Billericay Town Crier

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BILLERICAY TOWN COUNCIL

Volume 8, Issue 1

February 2008

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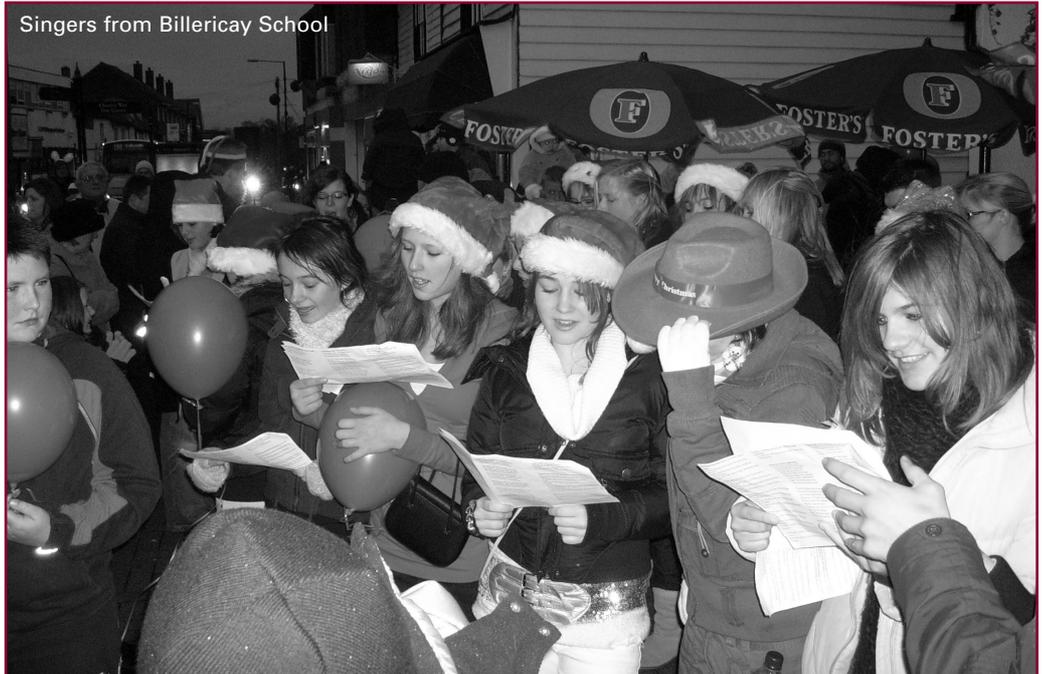
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TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS

On the 1st May 2008 Elections will take place to appoint twenty councillors. If you are interested in becoming a Town Councillor and serve your community, please contact the office for further details.

Singers from Billericay School



Santa Claus comes to town...again

Billericay was again fortunate that Santa Claus took time out, for the third year in succession, to switch on our Christmas Lights. On a cold, but dry, late November afternoon, he and our Town Crier walked down the High Street to the front of the Chequers Public House to meet the children of all ages at Billericay Town Council's annual switching-on celebration. Over 400 people welcomed him as he gave out sweets and Christmas greetings to all those who had come to meet him. The Town Crier welcomed all the people and thanked all those who had helped organise the event before inviting everyone to give a loud countdown 10..9..8..7..6..5..4..3..2..1 for Santa to switch on the Christmas Lights.

Billericay Town Council would like to thank all those who provided help in making the switching-on ceremony such a happy and seasonal event. These include our Town Crier Jim Shrubb, Mrs. Thwaite and all her staff at the Chequers Public House, Billericay School Choir,

members of the Lions Club, members of Billericay Youth Town Council (who dressed as cartoon characters gave out balloons to the children), the Police, all those businesses who have sponsored the lights but especially all those who came and supported the event.

Our Christmas Lights have again been supplied by Piggott's and, despite the blue-decorated globes being a bit dull under the sodium lights, add Christmas cheer to our High Street. The decorated trees and the four sets of icicles have provided extra brightness along most of the High Street and the decorated globes provide colour during the day.

Billericay Town Council and especially the Christmas Lights Working Party hope all the children (young and old) in Billericay had a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

I hope to see you all next year.

David Knight – Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Party

For further information and general enquiries contact:

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T: 01277 625732 **F:** 01277 634784 **E:** townclerk@billericaytowncouncil.gov.uk

Official Office Opening times 9.30am - 2.30pm Mon-Friday - outside these hours please ring as often the office is staffed

GOOD NEWS! NO INCREASE IN BILLERICAY TOWN COUNCIL TAX 2008-2009

On the 6th December 2007 the Town Council approved the Billericay Council Tax Estimates for the municipal year from 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 as proposed by its Finance & General Purposes Committee.

For the first time in the history of the Town Council THERE WILL BE NO INCREASE IN THE PRECEPT [Billericay Town Council Tax] levied on residents.

In 2006-2007 the tax was set at £17.10 for a Band D property, a below-inflation increase of 2.5% on the previous year. In 2007-2008 this was increased by 24 pence to £17.34, an increase of only 1.6%, approximately half of the rate of inflation. In 2008-2009 a Band D property will be charged the same £17.34, i.e. a ZERO

INCREASE in the local tax.

Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee consider that their main responsibility is to look after Billericay taxpayers' money and to manage the Town Council's finances in such a way that best value is obtained for our residents. The 2008-2009 Estimates fully provide funds for the projects submitted by the Council's Committees and Working Parties.

This has been made possible by the efforts of our Town Clerk, Mrs. Helen Philpott, through securing increased outside funding and sponsorships.

Councillor Edgar Guest – Chairman, Finance & General Purposes Committee

Billericay Town Ceremonial Flag

We are very pleased to now have a Ceremonial Flag Standard in azure blue and gold which had its first showing at the launch of the Fifth Billericay Town Guide on 2nd November.

It stood proudly on the stage for all to see and added greatly to the ambience of the evening and was enjoyed by the distinguished guests and residents.

We were pleased that our new Ceremonial Flag was paraded by the Girl Guiding Billericay Division, Chantry Senior Unit for the first time on 11th November through the High Street and at the war memorials.

Our flag took its place amongst the many others on parade that important day and each year we will invite one of our uniformed organisations to carry it on behalf of Billericay Town Council.

The flag is on show at the Town Council offices and is available for loan to any organisation that would like to use it to add colour and an identity with Billericay.

It is a double sided flag of the same design as the original flag which is flown at the police station but has a gold edging with tassels. It is mounted on a mahogany pole and stand with brass fittings.

Peter Bowditch – Chairman Environment Committee



Billericay's new flag centre stage

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

After many setbacks in trying to establish playground equipment at Outward Common, Mercer Road and Sun Corner we have agreed to approach Basildon District Council for an area of 265 sq. metres in Lake Meadows. The Town Council has raised £66,000 from outside organisations toward capital costs of the new facilities and we want to use these funds to give 11 to 16 year olds their own play area in Billericay. In addition we have secured a new youth shelter which will be erected close to the extended skateboard park in Lake Meadows.

Peter Bowditch – Chairman Environment Committee

WAR MEMORIAL Members of the Town Council War Memorial Working Party along with representatives of the Royal British Legion, Billericay Society, Billericay Archeological and Historical Society and members of the public undertook the annual cleaning of the war memorial and surrounding area at the beginning of November, prior to Remembrance Sunday. Localised tests of two chemical cleaners, to clean the inscription plaques on the Second World War memorial, have also been undertaken and these will be monitored for a twelve month period prior to a decision being made as to whether one of them should be used to clean the plaques before the Remembrance Parade next year.

PARKING IN BILLERICAY A County Council Proposal

In response to complaints from local residents Essex County Council has conducted a review of parking in Billericay. The issues seem to be centred on commuters and town centre workers parking all day in the residential areas surrounding the main town centre and areas near to the railway station.

Many residents have complained that this parking causes various problems such as reduced visibility, congestion, restricted access and safety concerns.

There are two main ways of addressing these problems. First, a residents parking permit scheme can be introduced; this would require residents to purchase parking permits and visitors would have to display visitor parking permits. The main problem with this scheme is that enforcement is difficult as the restriction would cover the whole of the working day and it does not guarantee a parking space as the number of permits can outnumber the number of

parking spaces. The second method is to introduce a one-hour parking restriction in the middle of the day. This works quite successfully in many streets already and has the advantage of being easy to enforce as enforcement can be targeted to roads at specific times when restrictions are in force. However, if residents do not have access to off street parking on their property, a one-hour restriction can be very inconvenient. The Town Council has copies of the detailed proposals, which are available for you to view.

Should you wish to comment upon the proposals, either in favour or against you should contact ECC Highways and Transportation Services on 01268 297572/297577 and ask for Peter Handscombe or Michael Cottage. As the issue covers such a wide area it may be that residents in areas away from the proposal areas may also wish to comment.

Jim Devlin – Chairman Planning Committee

BYTC update

The BYTC were busy during November which started with their annual meeting at which Vikram Footring was elected Chairman and Sophie Harrison Vice Chairman. The first function of Vikram as Chairman was to lay a wreath at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

On 12 November representatives of the Youth Council attended the YOPEY (Young People of the Year) Awards ceremony in Chelmsford as they had been nominated for an award. There were a number of very worthwhile entries and although the YTC did not win they received a cheque for £100, £50 of which will be donated to a local charity of their choice.

A week later saw the Official Opening of the extension of the Skatepark when members of the Town Council, District Council, Essex County Council and grant funders were in attendance to witness Vikram cutting the official ribbon. King Ramps Ltd. had been engaged for the day to provide demonstrations and workshops for those in attendance. Although the weather was not too good there were a number of keen skaters ready to take part in the training sessions and learn new tricks. A competition was also included in the programme with a local youngster being awarded a new skateboard.

The event was slightly marred a week later, on Sunday evening/early Monday morning, when a can of white paint was thrown over some of the equipment. This resulted in the skatepark having to be locked until the paint could be removed.



Youth Town Councillors receiving cheque

Calling all Youth Organisations

The Billericay Town Council are in the process of compiling a register of all youth activities within the town for children aged seven plus. It is felt that this information would be of great benefit for parents seeking Clubs for their children to join and also for children themselves looking for a new hobby or activity. It would also be beneficial for other youth organisations to know what is available within the town. So if you organise or belong to a club providing activities for youngsters please contact the Town Council office so that the details can be recorded in the register.

WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW BINS

Following the success of the two new yellow bins at the Railway Station, two more have been purchased by the Billericay Town Council for installing by the District Council in Stock Road; one at the junction with Lake Avenue, near to the existing bench, and the second halfway between Radford Way and Lake Avenue.

PLANT A SHRUB

Earlier in the year, as a result of approaches being made to the Town Council, it was agreed that, in partnership with Basildon District Council, a new planting scheme should be introduced in the garden around the statue of "The Child in the Park", Lake Meadows. Parents who had lost a child were invited to purchase a plant or shrub and the first planting took place during October. It is intended that such plantings will be undertaken twice a year.

The October planting within The Festival Gardens in Crown Road proved as popular as ever with fifteen shrubs being planted by people wanting to commemorate a loved one.

The next plantings will take place in March and will be advertised in the local press.

Presence Wins



The best Christmas window display for 2007 has been won by Presence. Congratulations to them. This is the second year that Billericay Town Council has held the competition and this year nine shops entered. The aim is to provide a little extra to complement our Christmas lights. The judging was done by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Billericay Youth Town Council. The prize of £100 to be donated to a local charity (Presence nominated Hamelin Trust) was presented by Councilor Beale on the 17th December outside the shop.

I would like to thank all those who entered. I noticed that other shops and businesses have put up some decorations this year to make the High Street even more attractive. Perhaps they would like to enter the competition next year. It costs nothing and a local charity benefits.

David Knight – Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Party

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Future Dates For Your Diary

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 5 Planning
 Thursday 7 Town Council
 Tuesday 19 Planning
 Tuesday 26 Environment

MARCH

Tuesday 4 Planning
 Thursday 6 Finance & General Purposes
 Thursday 13 Town Council
 Tuesday 18 Planning
 Thursday 27 Annual Town Meeting

APRIL

Tuesday 1 Planning
 Tuesday 8 Environment
 Thursday 10 Finance & General Purposes
 Tuesday 15 Planning
 Thursday 17 Town Council

All meetings start at 7.00 pm unless stated otherwise and are held at The Coach House, Crown Yard, High Street and are open to the public.

BDC – SATURDAY CRUNCH SERVICE

9.00 a.m. to 12 noon

Garden refuse and general rubbish can be taken to the following:

February 2 Little Burstead Car Park
 March 1 Radford Crescent Car Park
 April 12 Little Burstead Car Park

Billericay Parents Forum

Billericay Parents Forum offers support to parents and carers of children and young people in the local area and runs free courses, as well as open evenings with interesting speakers. The groups are friendly and informal with a maximum of 12 people and are led by trained facilitators who are parents themselves. The 5-week sessions are held in the day or evening in local venues, and sometimes a crèche is provided. We cover 0-6s, 7-11s and teenage years, with each course tailored to meet the needs of members of the group. There you will share experiences and challenges, often building friendships in a safe, confidential environment.

Many parents have benefited from our popular courses and say that it has made a real difference to their family life, building on their own success as parents but giving them new skills and approaches. We hope you will join us soon!

For further information telephone 01277 633910 – email: info@billericayparents.com or take a look at our website for the latest news: www.billericayparents.com

BILLERICAY TOWN COUNCIL GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR THE HIGH STREET'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2007

F.E. FARRER FUNERAL DIRECTORS
 HEADLINES HAIRDRESSING
 RAVENS BAKERY
 BENNETTS FUNERAL DIRECTORS
 BILLERICAY DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
 PETER D.J. MURRAY INSURANCE
 SHADFORTH PHARMACEUTICAL CO LTD
 PRESENCE IN BILLERICAY LTD
 CHEQUERS PUBLIC HOUSE
 PICTURESQUE
 INDIAN RUCHI
 STEPHEN JAMES DIRECT MAIL
 A.J. GRAYBURN & CO. LTD
 MICHAEL CULLEN & PARTNERS
 E. EDWARDS, SON & NOICE
 WOODWARD CARPETS
 ROGER GREEN & CO
 COACH & HORSES PUBLIC HOUSE
 SPECSAVERS OPTICIANS
 CURTIS O'BOYLE ESTATE AGENTS
 ROTARY CLUB OF BILLERICAY
 IAN BROWN INSURANCE / FINANCIAL PLANNING
 MR B CLARKE
 BILLERICAY HOMECARE
 LIONS CLUB OF BILLERICAY

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEMES

The Neighbourhood Watch office is based in the Police Station and, although an independent voluntary organisation, we work in close co-operation with Essex Police. We have approximately 150 Watches in the town covering some 4500 properties. The area covered is now the same as the Billericay Neighbourhood Policing Section, including Billericay East, West, and Burstead Wards, together with the new Crouch Ward which incorporates Noak Bridge and Steeple View taken over from Laindon, and Crays Hill and Ramsden Bellhouse from the Wickford police. For further information contact us at Billericay Police Station, High Street, Billericay CM12 9AB - Telephone (Direct Line) 01277 633090.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PANELS

Neighbourhood Action Panels are meeting regularly within the town. The Neighbourhood Action Panel is made up of local people who will assess the different concerns requiring police or partner involvement and establish priorities for policing in the area. The panel has been made up from selected members of the 'key individual network'.

This is not to be solely as a police tasking group as they will look to problem solve from within the community. If anyone is interested in becoming involved in the 'key individual network' please contact the relevant neighbourhood specialist officer for your ward who will be able to give you further information about this role.

Ps Andrew Shaw, Pc Julie Dawes for Billericay East and West, and Pc Nigel Scott for Burstead and Crouch wards. Telephone: 07969365610