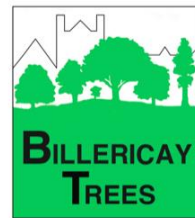


Billericay Tree Warden News-sheet for April 2021

We hope that everyone is safe and well in these continuing dangerous times. **Our next Committee Meeting, via Zoom, will be on 21st April at 6pm.** When we are able to meet again in person for Committee Meetings, it will be at the BTC's new Council offices venue at the Chantry Day Centre, Chantry Way.



Conserving Our Tree Heritage
In association with Billericay Town Council

Our News-sheet can now be read on the BTC's website.

The Mayflower Pilgrim 400 Apple! – The Billericay Tree Warden Group (BTW) ~ On Sunday the 4th April the following tree planting event was undertaken:-



Recently by chance, we learnt about such an apple tree from the Plymouth Tree Group who then put us in touch with the tree nursery down in Tavistock Devon that had cultivated them. They had produced forty trees that were mostly distributed in the Plymouth area for schools and community groups to plant but luckily they still had a few left in stock. We then approached

our Town Council to see if we could plant two of these trees to further celebrate the 400th anniversary of last year. Enthusiasm for the idea ensued and it was agreed that the trees would be planted in **Festival Gardens** where there is ample space. The BTC were pleased to fund the project. The Pilgrim 400 Apple is a maiden tree that will produce a fruit that is round and rosy, culinary and sweet as it matures. It is known that apples formed an important part of the early colonists' diet. In 2017, DNA tests confirmed that the tree was unique and in 2018 the Pilgrim 400 Apple was officially registered as a local cultivar and has been provided with a **Certificate of Provenance**. The idea was originally born out of a conversation between a Celia Steven of Plymouth, the granddaughter of a nurseryman, and John Stirling of Nottinghamshire a horticulturist. The two metre high bronze sculpture of the Mayflower and the Pilgrims is by John Doubleday (the same artist who sculpted the Lake Meadows "The Child in the Park") and is featured in the **Jim Shields Garden** at the intersection of the High Street and Western Road. Protocol dictated that a BTC Councillor was unable to attend because of the forthcoming May elections. However, we were joined by Brian Hughes, the Chairman of our town's BMTA Mayflower 2020 Committee, Julian Whybra also of that Committee and wife Pat. The photograph shows from left to right, Nathan Hume, the BTW's ecologist, Julian, Pat, Brian and John Smart, the Chairman of the BTW. Photograph by Neil Sumner, BTW member and local naturalist.



Refugee Oaks!

Pictured is **Trudi**, who on behalf of the BTW has acquired 530 oak tree “whips” from “**Save the Oaks Campaign**” that is widely distributing several thousand oaks from the Government’s failed national tree planting initiative. The trees will now honour those who have perished from Covid-19 and will go some way to counter the enormous tree loss from the ongoing HS2 Railway project. Pictured is an oak tree belt being planted at Barleylands. Other oak tree belt locations are planned for in our local area. **Provenance** - The oaks were grown by Maelor Forest Nurseries Ltd in Wales. Now part of the BSW Group. All trees represent British stock and have been grown on site in Wales with strictly no imports involved. The Government’s order of 750,000 trees was cancelled so to avoid mulching the tree stock they are being distributed to community groups for planting. Photograph by **Nathan**



Roadside Planting

Shown right is a BTW tree and hedge planting roadside project along the Southend A129 Road approaching Great Burstead and South Green. A mixture of oak, rowan and hawthorn was opted for. Photograph by **Nathan**



Investigations

97 Chapel Street – Within the High Street Conservation Area

The Developer has submitted his Planning Application (PA) for 97 Chapel Street. It is an ambitious project involving 5 dwellings of three storey design. If granted permission the original red brick structure is to be demolished. The Street Scene amenity multi-stemmed Bay Willow in the front will be retained. Out of the 18 existing trees on or adjacent to the site, 10 are to be retained and some pollarded. The BBC did not consider that any of the trees were candidates for a TPO although we did inquire. Some of the trees are on the border with the United Reformed Church. The BTW is to recommend by submitting a “**Comment**” on the PA, that the trees to be retained should be safeguarded from root compaction and trunk damage from the construction process. And that we recommend a clause to be written into the contract that should any retained trees eventually be lost then they should be replaced by the Developer. As the car parking is to the rear, we consider that the front gardens are in line for a “*soft landscaping*” exercise involving the addition of ornamental trees and other planting. This will add to the Street Scene amenity affect. However, at present there is no design for “*soft landscaping*” included within the PA documents. We understand that there are badgers in the area that will need protection during the site work. *The BTW is not anti-development but campaigns for the retention of trees and additional tree planting to complement the Street Scene amenity along with promoting wildlife in our urban areas.*

Porchester Road

We had a call from a resident of Porchester Road that there was non-TPO mature Eucalyptus tree at imminent risk of being felled in the rear garden. So we quickly visited site and talked through the issue with the Tree Surgeon and came to understanding that rather than felling, the tree would benefit from a crown reduction and the sides trimmed. Several residents adjacent to the garden were keen that the tree remained as it was a feature of the gardens. The tree was trimmed accordingly.

Grosvenor Gardens – Public Footpath to Perry Street

During recent high winds an oak tree fell across the public footpath that connects Grosvenor Gardens to Perry Street. The BBC duly arrived and reopened the footpath. However it is considered that other trees in the vicinity may pose a H&S risk, so a BBC Tree Officer is to visit the site and assess the situation. So the BTW and several of the residents local to the area, contacted the BBC to alert them to the situation.

Progress at the 26 acre Extension to the Wickford Memorial Park Beauchamp Field – A Wildlife and Recreational Project

Not a BTW project but one of our members, ecologist **Nathan**, has been working with the Basildon Council on the overall landscape design of the site. Over the weekend of the March 20th & 21st contractors planted c.4000 native trees planted in four distinct blocks. In time, this will be a significant addition for carbon storage. The site will eventually include a



mosaic of wildlife habitats including an orchard, 5 small ponds and a wildflower meadow. The site is an ex-school field. A map of this exciting project was featured in our News-sheet for February 2021. Photograph by **Nathan**.

Borough Council News

At a recent meeting of their Neighbourhoods & Public Spaces Committee it was agreed that suitable Council land sites in the Borough will be identified for tree planting. It was described by the Council as a tree planting framework to enlarge the Borough's urban forest that is so essential if the Climate Crisis is to be addressed. Along with the now advertised 26 acre extension to the Wickford Memorial Park involving the planting of c.4000 native trees, Gloucester Park has also benefited by fruit tree and oak tree planting. This initiative by the Council runs parallel with their three year Pollinator Action Plan that promotes the sowing seeds for wildflowers on roundabouts, parks and open spaces around the Borough to bring back colour, insects and enhance the "wildlife corridors". This positive approach to increasing the Borough's tree stock will hopefully reflect in the way that the proposed Local Plan development will take into account not only tree retention but also significant tree planting on those sites ("soft landscaping").

Other Parishes in the Borough

The BTW was requested to provide an article for the Newsletters of both the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet and the Little Burstead Parish Councils. It is hoped that other Parishes in our Borough will form their own Tree Warden groups.

BTW Posters

We now have our updated BTW poster distributed and installed in the various noticeboard outlets around the town.

BTW Calling Cards

We have had printed our professionally designed calling cards and will distribute them to members when practical to do so.

The Value of Coppicing:-

Now that our News-sheet has a wider distribution via the BTC's website, we reproduce an earlier article to emphasise the relevance of coppicing. For there has been a widespread misunderstanding, recently expressed on social media, that coppicing is damaging to ancient woodland.

"This has been a very difficult message to get across locally. Some see that the coppicing of our woodlands as destructive. It could not be further from the truth and put into an historical context will explain the reasoning. It is most likely that many ancient woodlands, such as Norsey Wood, would not exist today had they not been a valuable source of timber for local craftsmen and their families over the centuries; and thus were protected for providing livelihoods by the action of coppicing. In the early days, wildlife biodiversity was a by-product of coppicing for livelihoods, whereas today coppicing is directly carried out to promote wildlife biodiversity and keep alive the ancient skills of woodcraft. Thus the axiom "A wood that pays is a wood that stays" rings true. Without the traditional regime of coppicing, we would have even less woodlands nationwide than we have today. Coppiced trees have ancient root systems. The message contained in the axiom says it all - It is a highly relevant historical link to the past. A comprehensive and erudite article on coppicing is to be found on the Norsey Wood Society's website. <https://www.norseywoodsociety.uk/coppice> "

Local Plan – Part Area 17b – Sheperds Tye Field

There has been a proposal for a Retirement Home to be built between the London A129 Road and the Billericay Lawn Tennis Club. The company in question is McCarthy & Stone. This is a pre-Planning Application consultation exercise to take soundings from the residents of our town. Covid-19 has meant that a public meeting has not been possible. See:- www.mccarthyandstone-consultation.co.uk/Billericay The BTW only comments on Local Plan issues with how they would affect trees and wildlife. The BTW has responded to the consultation and has recommended the following:- It is good to see that the bordering trees and hedges are to be retained to reduce traffic noise and maintain the “wildlife corridor” effect. And thus the “Street Scene” amenity preference will be maintained. The line of 11 mature oaks between the proposed scheme and the tennis courts are an ancient border and a group TPO has been applied for. Any construction work will need to take into account the risk of root compaction and trunk damage of all the bordering trees and hedges. The BTW recommends that the “*soft landscaping*” exercise carried out by the project would benefit by the planting of Strawberry trees and Rowan trees within the courtyard. The trees will flourish well in the courtyard’s “micro-climate” and add much visual interest to residents and their visitors. The 12 gable ends to have integral bird nest bricks installed under their eaves for Swifts, Great tits, Blue Tits and House Sparrows. This wildlife initiative of providing a meaningful number of homes for birds in residential New Build is slowly becoming a national norm.



**Thank you to the Billericay Town Council for providing the BTW
with advice and moral support.**

Prepared by the Billericay Tree Wardens [Editor JHS - 05/04/2021]

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File: TWG-News-April 2021~