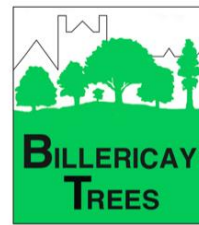


Our latest News-sheet is now available to view on the Billericay Town Council's website and back issues are listed under the header "The Town". There are also two tree related Fact Sheets included to advise residents on tree issues.



Conserving Our Tree Heritage
In association with Billericay Town Council

NOTABLE TREES IN OUR TOWN

This and future News-sheets will illustrate the classic trees that dot our town, gardens, parks and countryside. They range from our classic native tree species to non-native specimen trees that range in age from mature, veteran to ancient.



[1]



[2]

1] Ancient Oak – There are at least two examples in the Queen's Park Country Park woodland - An ancient tree is a tree which is remarkably old for its species and this can vary dramatically depending on the species. All ancient trees are also known as veterans. It is quite possible that some of our ancient oaks in the town were around as saplings when Shakespeare was writing his sonnets! And have silently witnessed the passing generations of us humans ever since. **2]** A classic and veteran oak that is off Perry Street adjacent Lake Meadows. Several years ago a main limb on the lower right broke away and demolished a long run of fence! But that did not deter the owner or their good neighbour from being the natural guardians of the tree. Last year in the spring drought the oak looked to be under stress but this year, as shown above, it is in fine fettle. It's no doubt a haven for wildlife.

Basildon Our Borough – Summer Issue:-

Is a 36 page publication recently delivered where the new Council administration is presenting a radical change in thinking right across the board. A mindset that is in tune with the natural world and improving the lives of the residents. The Borough is to address the Climate Change emergency in the many aspects of its services, upgrading facilities, decarbonizing Basildon Centre, encouraging businesses to operate with sustainability in mind and has set out a "Tree Planting Framework" for the future. Biodiversity is to be enhanced by a relaxation of the mowing regime on some main roadside verges and roundabouts to encourage wild flowers and their pollinators to flourish. "Small changes – Big Impact" is the strapline. It's a visionary overview that has its roots in practical solutions – A rewilding of the urban landscape by joining up the dots.

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC):- <https://queensgreencanopy.org/> 70 years a Monarch.

The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee." **The QGC's Patron is His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.**

Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting a tree or trees. The

recommended planting seasons are from October 2021 to March 2022 inclusive and then from October 2022 to March 2023 inclusive.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage planting of trees to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations.

This initiative can be celebrated by various means – By residents planting a tree in their own garden and by schools from Comprehensive and Primary through to Pre-schools and Playgroups. Free tree packs are available from the Woodland Trust. Surprisingly, there are c.37 such education establishments in Billericay! Landowners are encouraged to plant a copse or a woodland.

The QGC is supported notably by The Royal Mail – The John Lewis Partnership – Waitrose - The Woodland Trust – The RHS – Defra – Cool Earth and others.

BBC's Country File:- The programme has launched its Plant Britain campaign, which aims to get the nation planting. Its first goal is the planting of 750,000 trees – A figure that represents one tree for every UK primary school starter in 2020. The project has royal and celebrity support with both Prince Charles and Dame Judi Dench encouraging us all to participate.

Covid-19 - In Memoriam:- The pandemic is still with us but is hopefully on the wane, especially as more of the population become vaccinated. There are two notable memorial initiatives being set-up to mark this nightmare of our time.

St Paul's Cathedral:- The Covid-19 pandemic is to be marked by a memorial at St Paul's Cathedral. Called "**Remember Me**" and already has a "**Book of Remembrance**". It will be both a physical and an online memorial. It is open to people of all faiths, beliefs or none.

<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/news-press/latest-news/remember-me-fundraising-campaign-to-raise-funds-for-physical-memorial-at-st-pauls>

The Basildon Borough Council (BBC):- And at a more local level, the BBC is to honour those that have perished in the Borough from the pandemic by planting a series of cherry tree "**Circles of Remembrance**" across the Borough. It is quite possible that one of these will be at the Queen's Park Country Park although that needs to be verified. There is soon to be a crowdfunding campaign launched by the BBC to fund the project.

<https://www.basildon.gov.uk/article/8501/In-the-news-Basildon-Council-to-create-five-remembrance-tree-circles-across-the-borough>

These locations will be where those who have lost loved ones can visit and pay their respects and a permanent reminder to us all of our national and local tragedy.

Back from near oblivion! – The two Pilgrim 400 Apple trees:-



On the 4th April the BTW planted two Bramley apple trees at the Festival Gardens, funded by our Town Council. However a little later the stems had been partially broken by persons unknown. We affected a glue, splint and rubber band repair and continued to water them. But a little later they were completely ripped away from the ground and lobbed stakes and all into the nearby shrubbery! A little later one of our BTW members found them and took them home for safekeeping. Miraculously the repair was still in place! They were replanted in large pots and given sanctuary in a private garden where they have flourished. It will be decided where to replant them at a later date. A member of the Mill Meadows Society (MMS) has



the skills to graft cuttings onto a rootstock and has kindly offered to propagate the trees when they are advanced enough to take cuttings. Perhaps enough for a small orchard if that's not too ambitious! Like the Pilgrim Fathers, the Pilgrim 400 apple trees are survivors! Photo by Neil Sumner.

A BTW School Project's Team has been formed.

They are to contact some of our local schools with the message:-

How your school can get involved - The Woodland Trust is providing free tree sapling packs for schools.

Planting starts from October but you can start planning ahead now [Plant a Tree for the Jubilee - Woodland Trust](#) The QGC have a dedicated online education resource including fun quizzes and interactive activities.

Find out more at the [Map & Education Hub - The Queen's Green Canopy](#)

We've already had two responses from local schools and are due to follow them up.

Some Essex Tree Planting Projects:-

Essex Forest Initiative:- Set up in October 2019 by the Essex County Council (ECC) with the intention of planting 375,000 trees across Essex in the following 5 years. To date, 39,000 have been planted and Parish Councils have been invited to take advantage of the scheme. An initiative directly focused on carbon capture, biodiversity and improving air quality.

The Lower Thames Crossing:- Should this controversial project go ahead, then Highways England plan to plant 150,000 native tree species at Hole Farm near Great Warley in Brentwood. Elsewhere along the route to the crossing will be another 360 hectares of native tree planting, hedgerow creation and ponds. Carbon capture and serving nature is the way it is being promoted. It will be managed by Forestry England.

The Wickford Memorial Park Extension – Beauchamps Road:- c.3500 (three thousand five hundred) trees have already been planted by the Basildon Parks team to complement a suite of biodiversity additions of ponds, a wildflower meadow and an orchard. It represents a 26 acre native tree / wildlife and recreational facility for the local community. This project has been co-designed by our BTW ecologist member Nathan Hume representing the Essex Wildlife Trust. Previously reported with an illustration of the design in our February News-sheet.

Woodland Creation:- A multi-approach is recognized as the most efficient way of creating woodland across a landscape. Additional to those outlined above with the planting of young native trees, a rewilding approach can also be adopted. That is to let natural regeneration occur whereby a vacant field (preferably of low wildlife value) lay next to established woodland for Jays and squirrels to bury acorns and tree seeds. The resultant woodland created by wildlife for wildlife will then reflect the benefit of the local tree provenance with a minimal input man.

Relaxation of the Verge Mowing Regime:-

The Basildon Borough Council (BBC) has relaxed their mowing regime of some grass verges. A win-win situation whereby wildflowers and insects are encouraged to thrive with cost savings for the Council. A trial is ongoing at the main routes that serve Uppermayne and Nethermayne and will be extended to other verges. There has been a call for this biodiversity enhancement to be implemented by local nature conservationists for quite some while now so the scheme is welcomed.

Planning Application Checking Team - We have produced a PA Checklist – Aide Mémoire – Describing the main items to check for plus the more obscure items. We have submitted "Comments" on several Planning Applications where it is considered that mature and characterful trees are being unnecessarily cited as problems. Felling is a last option. Experienced Tree Surgeons often present a solution that benefits both the tree and is acceptable to the tree's owner.

The Planning Application for 97 Chapel Street:- This site is just off our High Street but in the Conservation Area has been of concern for quite some while. However, it has now been refused Planning Permission. A gap-site Developer had proposed five new tall dwellings adjacent to the United Reformed Church. He had maximized the footprint of the new buildings that would encroach on the many existing trees there. The BTW is not opposed to development per se but does expect existing mature trees to be retained where possible and replacement planting as appropriate. However, we expect the Developer's Planning Application (PA) to

be resubmitted but as a scaled down version. A common practice among gap-site Developers we understand. The BTW has been liaising with the Basildon Borough Council throughout on this PA. An error was picked up in the independent tree survey report that was submitted with the PA whereby the existing tree species had been grossly misidentified. In our opinion, there is a fine oak to the rear of the site that should be retained but does not qualify for a TPO we are informed. There are badgers local to the site.

Care Home by “Frontiers” pre-Planning Application:- A premature proposed Local Plan development (part-area H18) has been submitted for a 76 bed Care Home by the “Frontiers” company. It is tucked into the corner formed by the A129 Southend Road and Coxes Farm Road and is adjacent to St Peter’s RC Primary School. Full details can be found on the BBC’s Planning Portal PA 21/00744/FULL. The BTW has submitted a PA “Comment” on the tree issues involved as is our remit but leaves the controversial Green Belt and infrastructure issues to others. The Application includes a detailed tree survey that illustrates how the bordering trees and hedges would be retained. These are essential to maintain the “wildlife corridors” that connect the tree and hedge lines either side of the development. Should construction go ahead there would need to be some tree protection measures required in terms of avoiding root compaction and trunk damage and any resulting gaps would need to be planted. With an aging population there is a need for more residential and nursing care homes.

Recent Investigations:-

With regards trees, we are now checking Planning Applications for the **Little Burstead** area. Their **Parish Council** has asked for advice with regards a local property owner who has felled two mature conifer trees in in the Conservation Area. The property owner had been ordered by BBC Enforcement to replace the trees but so far the instruction has not been adhered to. The enquiry continues.

Ivy – Boon or Bane? In recent years the **Parish** has suffered from someone hacksawing through the base of over half a dozen c.4inch diameter ivy stems mainly on aged oaks. It has been an act of vandalism and local naturalists were appalled. Such ivy could be c.50 years of age. Excess coverage of ivy on standalone trees can in time lead to a windthrow situation but within woodland, there is less chance of it. Ivy is part of our natural flora and serves its purpose of providing nesting sites and food for birds while hosting a variety of insect life. Ivy does not strangle a tree or take nutrients from it but just gains support. The BBC Tree Officers inform us that where ivy coverage is significant each case should be judged on its merits and not removed at every opportunity. Qualified Tree Surgeons will also advise on a particular situation and BBC Planning would need to be informed if it were to apply to a TPO designated tree or within a Conservation Area.

The Waltham Forest (WF) Greenways Development Initiative in SE Billericay:- WF owns land where there are four car parks in the Greenway / Salesbury area. They want to convert the land use to build 19 number 2 bedroom properties in total. Only the car park behind the shops on the Greenway has trees within its boundary. We then received a call from a local resident to the car parks saying that he was concerned that at least one oak would be under threat should Planning Permission be granted. So the BTW attended a WF consultation at the nearby 16a Morris Road and discussed how the development would affect the trees there. We were assured that the three oaks illustrated on their preliminary sketch plan will be landscaped into the scheme but a fourth tree not illustrated may need to undergo tree work? WF claimed that there are no TPO trees on the site but this needs to be verified. A clearer picture will emerge if and when the BBC receives a Planning Application for the Development on which the BTW will be able to submit a “Comment”. The BTW has sent a letter to WF outlining our concerns. It has to be said that this development could provide much sort after housing. We have thanked the resident who brought this matter to our attention.

The Chapel Court / Chantry Way area:- We are currently engaged in an investigation where regulations may have been breached but for legal reasons it would be premature for the BTW to further comment.

Local Tree Planting:-

The Outwood Common Road – c.700 metres of tree and hedge line planting - Another dry spring meant that we were yet again unable to plant as the ground was too dry and hard. So having just received gratis 420 tree and hedge plant “whips” from the Woodland Trust (WT), BTW’s Nathan and Neil spent a backbreaking few hours “heeling” them in at the Norsey Wood tree nursery! The Norsey Wood Society has also ordered a generous batch of tree and hedge “whips” for the project that are scheduled to arrive in time for planting in

November. So come the autumn, and hopefully Covid-19 will not inhibit our efforts, we will call upon our members and other keen volunteers for a planting session. Eventually, the c.700 metre long field edge adjacent the Norsey Wood entrance will be planted by two staggered rows of tree and hedge plants. This will provide the all essential “wildlife corridor” between the two extensive woodland blocks at either end of the run. This is an example of one of the core remits of the Essex Wildlife Trust’s “Living Landscapes” remits.

Norsey Wood Tree Nursery:-

The BTW is to grow on c.300 trees from nuts and seeds sourced from notable local native tree species in the autumn. Funding has already been secured for the project. These will supplement further native tree and hedge “whips” generously supplied by the WT. Nathan is to lead the project.

St. John’s Church – Outwood Common Road

We note that the church has undertaken some quality tree planting on the adjacent green using “standards”. It’s surprising how such a project can enhance an area and catch the eye. The local “Street Scene” amenity aspect has been well enhanced.

Membership:- The BTW welcomes another two members – An environmentalist and an accomplished wood turner – Two apt skills!

Posters:- We now have BTW posters throughout the town that advertise and describe our role.

Local Plan:- There is a recent update to the **Local Plan** that is outlined on the Billericay Action Group’s (BAG) website:- <https://www.billericayactiongroup.org.uk/> Basically the government Inspectorate has asked the Basildon Borough Council to make some significant changes to the existing Plan and undergo another public consultation. BAG and the Chair of the Billericay District Residents’ Association (BDRA) has written to Cllr Andrew Baggott the now Leader of the BBC requesting that positive changes are made of the Plan to benefit the town. As is understood by many, c.2,700 homes are proposed to be built in and around the town and the infrastructure problems that it will incur are seen as unacceptable. And the Green Belt infringement issue has always been seen as highly controversial. Since 2013, there have been several Local Plan public consultations that have been faulted / rejected by the Inspectorate.

The BTW will seek assurance that when the proposed main development sites (currently there are nine) get the go ahead from the government’s Inspectorate, many of the mature and quality trees can be retained. Further, we will advocate that all the trees in the developments, existing and the new “*soft landscape*” planting by the Developer, will be designated a Group TPO as was achieved when the Queen’s Park estate was built. Our mature trees are crucial to combating pollution and Climate Change. Billericay’s tree stock is its green lung replacing polluted air with oxygen.

A thank you must go to the Billericay Town Council for providing the BTW with advice, a meeting room at the BTC’s Chantry Centre, moral support and indemnity insurance whilst out in the field

**The BTW’s next committee meeting will be on Tuesday 28th July at 6pm
Whether via Zoom or at the Chantry Centre is yet to be decided**



Prepared by the Billericay Tree Wardens [Editor JHS – 04/07/2021]

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File: TWG-News-July 2021~

