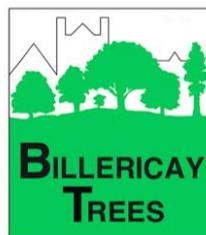


## The Billericay Tree Warden's Bi-monthly News-sheet September 2022

Our News-sheets are available to view on the Billericay Town Council's website including back issues and are listed under the header "The Town". There are also tree related Fact Sheets included to advise residents. The Factsheets can also be viewed on Facebook at <https://tinyurl.com/k8bzd772>.  
<https://tinyurl.com/3hxdy5m9>



Conserving Our Tree Heritage  
In association with Billericay Town Council

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### 1] Vandalism at Laindon Park

The news recently came through that a newly planted tree circle at Laindon Park by the Basildon Borough Council (BBC) in commemoration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee had been completely vandalized. Needless to say, the Council and their Councillors were appalled at such wanton destruction and went into print about it in no uncertain terms! Vandalism to new plantings is endemic in this part of Essex. There seems little chance of catching the perpetrators and police coverage is minimal despite there being more police presence in Essex this year. A clear case of the minority spoiling the urban environment for the majority. There's a limit to CCTV coverage that can be installed in out-of-the-way places. The BBC has said that they will replant in due course.

### 2] Pond Creation at the Extension to the Wickford Memorial Park (Beauchamps Drive)

An ongoing project by the BBC that has been co-designed by BTW member Nathan already has c.3500 native trees planted and an extensive mixed fruit orchard plus a wildflower meadow project is to soon follow. There was call for volunteers who have wildlife ponds to introduce native aquatic plants in the two newly created and extensive ponds. Already wildlife has taken to the new habitat as there were several dragonflies beating up and down over the water and aquatic beetles had arrived! A member of the Norsey Wood Society kindly provided many aquatic plants from their wildlife garden pond. Native lilies have also been introduced. Newly created ponds invariably have that stark look about them but Nature will soon clothe the pond's banks in green and the aquatic plants will



quickly establish and multiply. News comes in that vandals were chased off before they could do damage to the recently planted woodland.

### 3] Tree Identification at Lake Meadows

Some years back, the Friends of Lake Meadows (FoLM) had prepared a tree guide for the park in the form of a map and a list of its tree species. However, since that time new plantings have taken place and a few existing mature trees had died and had been removed. So the BTW were requested to bring the map and its list of tree species up-to-date. So recently, over a few days, we surveyed the park and completed the task. Pictured is one of two Wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) that is native from the Sierra Nevada in California that grace the park. The park has c.45 tree species that not only represent those native to the British Isles but those from the temperate zones of other continents. Lake Meadows is as an arboretum where one can experience the various trees of the world! If one were to include the various shrub species in the park then the species list would be considerably more. A map and its list of tree species can be obtained from the FoLM. The park, its extensive lake, its semi-woodland aspect and varied habitats are a draw for wildlife with an emphasis on the birdlife and its bat population. Meanwhile it's serving as a fine recreational facility for our town's residents!



### 4] Two Possible Tree Planting Projects within Billericay

On behalf of the Basildon Borough council (BBC), Nathan has been on the lookout with a view to identify areas in the borough that are suitable for the borough's Climate Crisis tree planting projects. Two possible locations have been identified locally within our town. One is the recreational area off Pleasant Drive (off the Mountnessing Road north of the railway line) and the second is at Lake Meadows. These two locations have been agreed by the BBC as suitable.

At the Pleasant Drive recreation area there is to be substantial native tree planting next to the existing small but mature woodland and the existing wildlife pond is to be extended. It will be funded by the BBC. BTW member Dr Nigel Meadows has enlisted local community interest for the project. It is hoped that work can begin this autumn. A regular Community Police Officer presence has been organized at the site as unlawful activities sometimes occur there.

The existing mature woodland at Lake Meadows is to be extended by significant native tree planting involving "standard" trees rather than "whips". The project will be BBC funded.

Bearing in mind that we are in a drought situation, tree planting will not be practical until the rains come and soften the soil for planting. It is hoped that work can begin this autumn and then continue throughout the winter if necessary. We will of course be contacting our volunteer base with details as soon as we hear that these projects are scheduled for action.

### 5] Nature Conservation – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - The Government's Environment Act 2021

#### The Developer's responsibility and the process to achieve Compliance

#### Relevant to the Local Plan and other developments

*"From late 2023 onwards, it will be a legal obligation (mandatory) for Developers to consider the environmental impact of their development and ensure the biodiversity is left in a better state than before. It will soon become law for Developers to demonstrate the steps that have been taken to either preserve, protect, mitigate, or enhance any habitats found on site. This may include an increase in natural habitats and ecological features over time, which goes above the habitat originally on site".*

The new British Standard, named [BS 8683: Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain – Specification](#), builds on and adds to the [UK's Good Practice Principles of BNG](#) and [guide for development](#) produced by CIEEM, CIRIA and IEMA, providing a structured process for designing and implementing BNG based on good practice.

Planning Applications will need to thoroughly address the issue and demonstrate that a minimum of 10% BNG will result and be maintained for c.30 years. “Greenwash” is to be avoided!

The ecology company’s website “**Ecology by Design**” explains how in law BNG will operate from November 2023 onwards. Thus the Compliance issue is not the sole responsibility of the Local Authority although they will be part of the process involving several other “stakeholders”. The “Biodiversity Metric” is explained:-

<https://www.ecologybydesign.co.uk/ecology-resources/biodiversity-net-gain>

The ecology companies involved will need to be fully “Accredited” to avoid substandard and less than professional advice. Where a development’s footprint does not allow room for sufficient BNG then mitigation and offsetting will be required.

#### Relevant Acronyms:-

**CIEEM** Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

**CIRA** Construction Industry Research and Information Association

**IEMA** Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

**ENG** Environmental Net Gain – Air quality & flood risk management

**BNG** Biodiversity Net Gain – Good practice for development

#### 6] Some Trees at South Green Billericay



The trunk and its upper branches of a veteran oak that borders the South Green housing estate and the farmland on its southern edge. This is one of many characterful oaks in the hedge lines that border a drainage ditch. *“This oak tree and me, we’re made of the same stuff” – Carl Sagan.*

One of our BTW members lives in South Green and has explored the roads and adjacent countryside for its characterful trees. Grange Road, Church Street and Mill Road have some splendid mature oaks on the ECC Highway verges and in their front gardens. One large TPO oak has been identified as causing subsidence to a nearby property and thus has a Planning Application (PA) for its removal. Should this be so, it is hoped that replacement tree(s) can be planted in the area to compensate for the loss. Replacement trees automatically receive a TPO designation.

The wide verges and tree planting give the streets a presence of space and greenness that would be ideal for the revised Local Plan to adopt if and when the proposed new build housing estates spring up.

Where the farmland borders the housing estate at its southern edge, there is a series of oaks within the hedge lines that run along the drainage ditches. The veteran oak illustrated is of particular interest. It may have been pollarded as a younger tree to explain the very wide trunk. The overgrown vegetation at the base precluded

getting a chest high girth measurement but one side measures a chunky 2.4 metres and its depth we estimated at 1.5 metres. Assessing the age of a tree (without causing irreparable damage!) is problematic but in our opinion this oak could be in excess of 350 years old. The hedge and its trees most likely represent a planted border between farms and estates several hundred years ago and have now become part of our local Tree Heritage.

There is a Planning Application (PA) for an extensive solar farm on the agricultural land that borders the southern edge of the housing estate that has tree and hedge lines along the border. There is an independent Arboricultural Assessment within the PA that details a Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) that details the measures required to avoid damage to the trees and their roots. The BTW has submitted a "Comment" on the PA to that end.

**7] The Mill Meadows Fayre** – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – 11:00am to 4:00pm

**What's On?** – Folk Music (2 Acts), Dance Display, Morris Dancers, Remus Horse Sanctuary, hot and cold food and drink, beer and wine from Billericay Brewing Company, Chapel Street Kitchen, Milling Demonstration, Forest School, and many side stalls with games and local produce. *The Fayre is being organised jointly by Billericay Town Rotary and the Mill Meadows Society.*

**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 Personal Liability and Personal Accident insurance, for BTW members and their volunteers, whilst out in the field with no geographic restriction**

**The Billericay Tree Wardens are a voluntary group and all information contained therein is not legally binding and is provided as a source of advice and information only**

**The BTW's next members' committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 6pm  
Unless otherwise stated, we are to opt for a Zoom meeting**

**Prepared by the Billericay Tree Wardens [Editor JHS – September 2022]**

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