



**1] Barrenleys Wood** – A “friend” of the BTW has had published in the most recent BDRA newsletter an update and overview of the wanton destruction to Barrenleys Wood all in the pursuit of financial gain and at the expense of the environment. Note that our environmental proactive Cllr Andrew Schrader motivated the legal action to cease further destruction and get a mitigation exercise into place. Unfortunately the legal process overran the four years to achieve it whilst the owner of the wood has made millions of pounds that should have been paid in Landfill Tax. Thousands of tonnes of construction hardcore material will remain on site for evermore. The hope is for it to scrub over and eventually serve wildlife!

**2]** Also in the BDRA newsletter is a BTW article about the Monkey Puzzle tree at 29 Norsey Road that although there is a current Planning Application submitted, BBC Planning have started the paperwork to designate it a TPO as requested by the BTW. The gap-site Developer has been made aware of this. The gap-site Developer wants the tree removed to make way for a standalone garage. It will be interesting to see the outcome of this PA. The Monkey Puzzle tree is a splendid example of how it benefits the visual “Street Scene” amenity aspect of the road.

### **3] Loss of a Local Community Green and its Shady Area:-**



**Before & After!** On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April this year we were made aware that four mature trees had been felled on the green at the junction of Hillway and Hatfield Drive in East Ward. A shady green area with a high “Street Scene” amenity aspect had lost its community value to the local residents. Research indicates that it was a leftover piece of land from the Taylor Wimpey estate development, built many years ago, and had been recently put up for auction. A gap-site Developer now owns the land and

presumably will be submitting a Planning Application (PA) in due course for a dwelling to be constructed on the site. It is not illegal to fell non-TPO trees on private land that one owns even before submitting a PA. A change in Planning law would need to occur to prevent such a situation occurring! Enquiries are still being made by BBC Planning as there is a suggestion that the land was “adopted” and maintained by the Essex County Council Highways and there may be a legal angle to it.



An anomaly occurs in these situations for if the PA is refused, that is a property will not be allowed to be built on the site, there is no rule saying that the Developer should replace the trees. And thus the local community and the environment lose out. It has become evident that there are quite a few other slivers of leftover development land in our town, some with mature trees worthy of retaining, that are being acquired by gap-site Developers. Their first response is to fell any non-TPO trees, large or small, to clear the site. The BTW is of the opinion that there should be a sensible balance struck between infill house building (preferably affordable!) and the loss of our green community areas with their mature trees.

To add insult to injury, Dr Nigel and John visited another sliver of leftover Developer land nearby on 12<sup>th</sup> April that has presumably also been sold at a land auction. We had intended to apply for a TPO on a semi-mature ash tree but upon arriving a Tree Surgeon had felled the tree that very morning!

**4]** On the day of our CM on 5<sup>th</sup> April this year we received another email from MP John Baron saying that he was still trying to get the Forestry Commission (FC) to comment on the tree loss at 124 Norsey Road. They are not responding to his enquires! On the 11<sup>th</sup> April John sends a copy letter that he has just received from the FC (partially “redacted” by the FC!) that states that they are still

considering the legal aspects of the case! – Some 13 months after the felling! Reading between the lines there is probably politics involved that we are not party to and thus a reluctance to pursue the matter further. The BTW has thanked MP John Baron for consistently pursuing this matter.

**5]** We now have several “Friends” of the BTW - Those with contacts, professional skills and councillors who advise us of technical issues should we require them. This gives us a depth of knowledge and confidence to pursue lines of enquiry with respect trees and their related issues. The BDRA now rely on the BTW for advice on various Planning Application issues and are keen to publish our articles as is the Town Crier.

**6a]** At our CM on 5<sup>th</sup> April it was **Approved** that we would purchase a Banner that will add a professional touch should we undertake similar events as we did for the Open Day where we interfaced with the general public – Idea by June.

**6b]** Another idea that was **Approved** is that we hold a “plant sale” this summer in the High Street whereby we offer sapling Rowan trees and others and instructions on how to plant and maintain them. Neil & Nathan have expressed interest in mounting this project.

**6c]** Another idea that was **Approved** is to return to Brightside School and carry out another planting project. The idea is to plant a grove of buddleia in the squared off area bordered by timber railway sleepers next to a school building. Watering the plants at the school may be an issue but there may be a solution to it and June has volunteered to help with watering if the school will allow her access. Fiona is to further discuss these matters with the school.

**7]** For two years now, we have had a hotline to BBC Enforcement whereby we can ask for the TPO status of a tree (with reference to the fact that the BBC’s online TPO Tree Register is not fit for purpose) and receive an answer almost immediately. We have been careful to only use this facility when absolutely necessary. Tree issues are only one aspect that BBC Enforcement is responsible for so we are mindful not to inundate them with requests.

**8]** Nathan informs us that he is in partnership with Barleylands and is soon to plant up a new recreational facility there – The tree planting will be by contractors.

Then later in the autumn, as a BTW project, Nathan plans to plant up several smaller areas across the Barleylands site and this will be an opportunity for us volunteers to help with the planting and also invite the Billericay 6<sup>th</sup> Scout Group and Cubs to participate; as they have previously requested.

At some stage several of us will be required to order in free tree and hedge packs (whips) from the Woodland Trust.

The WT does not currently provide free tree guards and canes as they did in the past but Nathan has good stocks of these back at his yard.

**9]** We had a Zoom Brainstorming session following the CM that was as entertaining as it was instructive! The purpose of which is to identify areas of land available in the Billericay area for further tree planting. There are Minutes for this. This request has come via Joshua Childs, the Parks & Countryside Biodiversity Officer, discussing the issue with Nathan. We have already begun work in this request.

**10]** The BBC has, in the last couple of years, reorganized itself to combat the Climate Crisis and hired various qualified environmental staff to pursue this goal. Not only has the BBC engaged in major tree planting projects across the Borough but has reached out to the volunteer sector for assistance. As we know, Nathan has successfully worked in partnership with the BBC’s Joshua Childs in designing various eco-projects and providing practical support. There is an ECC element to these tree planting projects.

*As we understand it, the BBC and the ECC are leading the way to combat the Climate Crisis at both Borough and County level.*

**11]** We recently received a telephone call from BBC Enforcement. Through our work checking and “Commenting” on PAs and also by requesting TPOs of trees that are under a “*perceived threat*”, actively engaged in tree planting projects via Nathan’s input, the BTW is considered to be semi-professional and seen to be the “ears & eyes” of our locale.

Proof of the pudding is that in recent times the Billericay area has gained more TPOs than anywhere else in the 45 square miles of our Borough through the endeavours of the BTW. So the upshot is that they want us to continue doing what we have been doing and contact them if we feel that there are urgent tree issues to be discussed. *So this recognition reflects on all members of our team – Each of us having a particular skill to bring to the table.*

**12]** We have had an invite via the BTC to attend “**Billericay & Churches Together** – Cordially invites one of us and a guest to attend the Billericay Church Civil Service which is being held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 3pm at the Emmanuelle Church on the Laindon Road”:-  
[file:///C:/Users/John/Downloads/Civic%20Service%20Invite%202023%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/John/Downloads/Civic%20Service%20Invite%202023%20(1).pdf) RSVP by the 10<sup>th</sup> May. Please let John know if you and a guest are interested in attending – Thank you.

**This is an Interim BTW News-sheet that is for BTW members only.  
The items discussed are for the attention of its members only and should not be discussed  
outside of the group as sometimes sensitive issues are referred to that may have legal  
implications**

**A thank you must go to the Billericay Town Council for providing the BTW with advice,  
Personal Liability & Personal Accident Insurance whilst out in the field and for moral support  
Our next BTW Group Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 6pm  
We are opting for a Zoom meeting unless otherwise decided**

*File: TWG-Interim News April 2023 ~*