The BDRA is sometimes asked what we are doing about potholes in Billericay. The simple answer is that there is little we can do practically, but we do know some people who might be able to help.

Potholes are a national issue, or should that be a national disgrace?

The roads around Billericay are the responsibility of Essex Highways, part of Essex County Council (ECC), and to them falls the duty to repair potholes around our town. ECC receives over 60% of our council tax to fund its activities, including the work of Essex Highways. Residents of Billericay elect two councillors to represent us at ECC.

Potholes around Billericay are of particular concern to residents as a glance at local social media will demonstrate.

Essex Highways requires that the interactive map on their website is used to report potholes and it clearly shows the scale of the problem we, and they, face. In addition they do provide a telephone number to report risks to public safety: 0345 603 7631 or 0345 758 5592 for the text phone service.

The problem is that no feedback seems to be given as to when action will be taken and experience suggests that even unsafe potholes can take some considerable time to address. In addition there is no easy way to report contributory factors which can worsen the impact at a particular site.

The BDRA believes some better means is needed to make Essex Highways truly appreciate the scale of resident’s concerns, the issues at specific locations, and to encourage them to provide useful feedback on repair timescales.

ECC has previously had an annual scheme where County Councillors can nominate locally important, but not necessarily dangerous, potholes for repair and up to 10 days worth of repair time is allocated to these issues. ECC claims it recognises that councillors can bring their expert knowledge to bear onto the problem. The BDRA believes this should not be a once a year activity but an ongoing role of our two County Councillors. We believe that as members of our community they are perfectly placed to take to the council the necessary local knowledge and concerns of residents, to ensure appropriate action is planned in a timely fashion and implemented, to feed back such information to residents and to hold to account those unwilling to deliver the service residents expect.

So next time you see a pothole which gives rise to concerns report it to ECC using whatever means is most appropriate, but also let our County Councillors know what you have done and ask to be kept informed of progress. And let the BDRA know what you have done and what response you receive.

The BDRA is always ready to support and acknowledge those elected councillors who put residents’ concerns at the top of their priorities, but we are just as ready to criticise those who don’t.

Our current County Councillors are:

Dr Richard Moore: cllr.richard.moore@essex.gov.uk
Anthony Hedley: cllr.anthony.hedley@essex.gov.uk

Additional contact details are on the ECC website.

Can you help?

We are very pleased to report that all the vacancies listed last month have now been filled and my thanks to those members who volunteered. If there are any other readers who would like to volunteer please do let me know at chairman@bdra.org

FREE ADVERT!

We are offering a free one eighth of a page advert to a different local registered charity in each edition of the Resident, on a first come first served basis and subject to availability.

Please email resident@bdra.org to apply.
Billericay’s last cinema – The Ritz on Chapel Street – closed its doors in 1971 having opened in 1938 with “Flying Down to Rio”. In the cast were Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers and although not the stars it was their musical number in the film which really launched their careers. After closing The Ritz was converted first to a bingo hall, then a snooker club before the demolition of what was a great example of pre-war architecture. Although the flats that replaced it were much needed, like many buildings that are long gone from towns it’s presence would be welcomed today.

Fast forward 44 years to September 2015 and the Billericay Community Cinema opened its doors running monthly films in Billericay Library. It has become embedded in the fabric of our community having shown 104 films watched by 5,200 film goers, along the way winning a national award in 2016 for the “Best New Film Society” – beating off competition from London, Guildford, Newcastle and Glasgow.

So what is a “Community Cinema”? It’s a cinema run by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis catering to the needs of their local community. There are now over 1,500 across the UK. Some operate from small shacks in the Hebrides whilst others in London seat a couple of hundred people. About a third operated in rural areas – places with no easy access to multiplexes.

At Billericay Community Cinema our Thursday evenings have showcased some of the best films across the decades – from 1916’s “Battle of the Somme” & Buster Keaton’s “The General” (1926) to “Brief Encounter” via “Breakfast at Tiffany’s”, “To Kill a Mockingbird” and “The Maltese Falcon” – all accompanied by themed cocktails, freshly made popcorn and Billericay Brewing Co. beers.

With community life put on hold last March we were unable to celebrate our 5th birthday in October. The good news, however, is that we are now planning our return. July sees us running a trial show in the new Chantry Centre in front of a very small, socially distanced audience.

August will hopefully see a return to our regular schedule: coming up we are planning films spanning 75 years – including “West Side Story”, “North by Northwest”, 2017’s “The Darkest Hour”, “Holiday Inn” and the sci-fi “Forbidden Planet”.

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AT YOUR SERVICE
Dear Editor...

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to cast our vote that BDRA firmly concentrate upon item 1 being “Basildon Local Plan/Planning”, as the single most detrimental issue affecting us all. If this seriously damaging Plan is implemented it will adversely impact Billericay as we know it and irreversibly destroy it as a historic town for generations to come and to enjoy.

We are really pleased that Viv Burling has already in a relatively short space of time taken Billericay to heart. However, our fear is that Viv could be one of the last cohorts into Billericay to actually experience and enjoy its amenities and unique atmosphere.

Yours sincerely

Name and address supplied.

Editor – You can rest assured that we will continue our efforts regarding the Local Plan. See Page 11.

Dear Editor,

Subject: Billericay housing development

There have been so many valid reasons for not having the proposed massive housing development in Billericay. If housing development is to go ahead, may I suggest the land opposite the mayflower shopping centre would be a more suitable location, the dual carriageway A127 and A132 could handle the extra traffic far easier than the roads around Billericay town centre and there is very little population in this area at the moment.

Name and address supplied.

Editor – I’m sure we all see much better places to build than those currently in the Local Plan and your suggestion is as good as any.

We welcome further comments from Members on all subjects.
Events

We’d love to hear from all our clubs and societies to know if they have any plans for the remainder of the year. Simply email us at resident@bdra.org if you would like us to include an update for your club in the Summer / Autumn edition of this magazine and perhaps information for interested residents wondering how to get in touch for when you restart.

The Events page is dedicated to the charities, clubs and societies that are “Not for profit” and exist purely for the residents for the town, however if you are a preschool or school having fund raiser of any type we would also be happy to advertise your event here.

Billericay Food and Drink Festival
Sample some of the finest food and drink at the first annual Billericay Food and Drink festival on Sunday 25th July from 11.00am-6.00pm at Billericay Town Football Club. More than 45 stands showcasing food and drink including champagne, oysters, real ales, cheese and chocolate. Tickets include a raffle ticket for a chance to win a £500 luxury hamper of goodies in support of the British Heart Foundation. Limited free parking. Entry £5 on the doors and under 12’s go free. For more information go to the Billericay Food and Drink festival facebook page.

Billericay Horticultural Society
Great News – as a Society we hope to return to normal from Monday 16th August. We shall meet in the new Day Centre from 8.00-10.00pm. Visitors are always welcome £2. Refreshments available. Events will be under government Covid guidelines. Monday 16th August “Clippings” with Darren Lergo.

‘Gone Too Soon’
Bereavement support group for Parents who have lost a Son or Daughter of any age, in any circumstances and if recent or a while ago. Come along and meet other parents who can relate to how you feel after the loss of a Child. You will be given a warm and friendly welcome in a safe environment. Contact Lyn on 07387 805406 or email lyn-currie@hotmail.co.uk. www.goneotoosoonline

Billericay Tree Warden Group
Due to unforeseen circumstances, the BTW will be unable to mount the Photographic Exhibition at the Mayflower event at our library this year.

Youth and School Bridge
We are going to run a Summer Holiday Club for Youth Bridge at Barleylands. Bridge is incredibly good for the mind – it helps with maths, team building and memory. It is suitable for children aged 8 years and above. There will be two taster days on Saturday 17th and Saturday 24th July and then the club will run every Thursday from 5th August. This is a not for profit activity. Contact: Youth & School Bridge, On-Line from England (bridgewebs.com)

Photofold Camera Club Exhibition
Saturday 4th September 2021 from 10.00am-4.00pm.
From September we will be moving our meeting location to the Chantry Centre, Chantry Way Billericay which is the new home of Billericay Town Council. This celebratory exhibition will showcase our best images of the year. Why not check out photofold.org.uk.

Barleylands Farm
Essex Sausage & Cider Music Festival Friday 27th to Sunday 29th August, 11.00am to 10.00pm. Lots of kids entertainment, a wide variety of high-quality food vendors and beverages including our famous cider collection! (We don’t just sell cider) Not to mention an incredible lineup of the very best tribute acts. We are extremely pleased to announce that the amazing BOLDOOG FREESTYLE MOTOR X TEAM will be performing at our 2021 festival! All shows are included in the cost of admission. Go to Barleylands.co.uk for booking and ticket prices. Hosted by James Dean events.

Back to the 90’s Open Air Concert one night only, open-air concert on Friday 27th August – 4.00 to 10.00pm. The concert will be headlined by the VENGABOYS and supported by other famous 90’s acts. These are all original artists and not tribute artists! Go to Barleylands.co.uk for booking and ticket prices. Hosted by James Dean events.

Bilicreay Mayflower Rotary Club
Summerfest at Sun Corner will take place on Sunday 8th August. There may still be regulations, but our classic car show and stage acts are back. The marvellous, madcap Photofold Camera Club will run every Thursday from 5th August. This is a not for profit activity. Contact: Youth & School Bridge, On-Line from England (bridgewebs.com)

Emmanuel Church
GIG IN THE GARDEN 2021 The tenth annual Gig in the Garden takes place on Sunday 11th July. Three fabulous artists to enjoy with a mixture of Americana/Country, Folk/Blues, Swing/Jazz/Reggae and classic songs. There will be a reduced number of people in attendance as we seek to follow government guidelines which may still be in place in July.

THE PANTALOONS: PRIDE & PREJUDICE
The marvellous, madcap and crazily inventive Pantaloon’s Theatre Company back to Billericay to perform their own twist on the Jane Austen classic ‘Pride & Prejudice’ in the Rectory Garden on Sunday 1st August. There will be a reduced number of people in attendance as we seek to follow government guidelines which may still be in place in August. Contact www.emmanuel-church.info

Downham Hall
Join us for a day at Downham Hall learning how to make your own special hand tied bouquet.
Wednesday 11th August from 9.30am-2.00pm. Begin the day with a refreshing drink followed by a two hour workshop run by local Florist Poppy Dots and finish with a buffet lunch and drink. £75pp. To book please call on 01268 422464 or email on: info@downhamhall.com

Reading Rooms
Come and join us at Billericay Reading Rooms for our Summer Sale on Saturday 17th July, 11.00am to 2.00pm. We’ll have lots of good saleable items, including homemade cakes and preserves, china, jewellery, books and bric-a-brac, all at bargain prices And of course, our own merchandise too. Contact Daphne on 01277 840217.

To advertise your event here please email resident@bdra.org

Deadline is 10th August for events between 10th September and 9th October 2021

An event listing must have the following details: Date, Time, Location, Contact person’s telephone number, email and have website. Priority is given to Billericay and District events.
Groups programme details are encouraged. It is the responsibility of the group to send in changes and renew annually.
Farewell

Well, they (whoever they are?) say “good things come to those who wait” and having waited nearly 60 years it is time to retire.

I am looking forward to it, but at times like this it is hard not to reflect on the changes that have taken place since I started work in 1963. Back then there was no “Regulator”, no Ombudsman, no compensation scheme in fact anyone could call themselves a financial adviser without having passed one exam or test to prove you knew what you were doing!

Nowadays we are probably the most over regulated country in the World. It is so regulated that was very important to us.

As the years have gone by it has been increasingly time consuming to ensure we comply with all the rules and regulations imposed on us. As our company grew, we really needed legal, computer, Human Resources, Compliance, accounts, and investment departments. Without those specialist resources we had to do it ourselves which took us away from actually doing our job as advisers. I never thought that at my age I would have to learn how to develop a computer program, fun but time consuming.

It became clear that we either needed to charge more, (never a popular move with clients,) or become much larger and the best way to achieve that quickly was to become part of a larger firm, which is what we have done.

Most of our existing advisers and support staff have joined the new firm which means our clients will continue to receive on-going first class professional Independent Advice. The new Company has considerable resources at its disposal, with all the personnel required to offer a complete service, something that was very important to us.

Joining a larger firm also means that Mike Joslin and I can at last retire knowing that our staff and clients are being properly cared for. Having helped thousands of clients to organise their finances to enable them to stop work it is now our turn to hang up our calculators and retire.

Our contact details are still the same so if you need us, we can be contacted on the usual number and e-mail address, but we are closing the office. I hope you have reaped some benefit from these articles over the years but would ask that you remember only one thing; – There is absolutely no substitute for fully Independent Financial Advice. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Take care, stay safe.

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Happy Pride month one and all!

Let’s not forget that Pride Month is more than just a month full of bright colours and parades… it’s a wilful, intentional reminder to be an ally to all the members of the community all of the time.

For those in all parts of the community, it is as important as ever to plan for the future. If there is anything that the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, nothing is certain for anyone, no matter who you are.

I work in the Wills, Trusts and Probate team at Birkett Long and I have seen first-hand the increased level of anxiety the pandemic has created. One thing I know for sure is that making sure your affairs are in order should be at the top of your priority list in 2021. Even if you have a will, does this still reflect your wishes?

Life changes very quickly and I would urge everyone over the age of 18 to have a will and Lasting Powers of Attorney in place, just in case there is ever a time when life doesn’t go to plan. Most people have some form of opinion about what they would like to happen regardless of their identity or background. For those in particular parts of the community especially, a person’s identity may have an impact on their wishes for example, on the care and treatment they would like to receive.

If you have any questions about anything ‘Private Client’ related, we are here to help. We are still working from home where possible so if you don’t yet feel comfortable with coming into the office, we can take your instructions via telephone or video call.

I am always available for a free, 15 minute chat, in the first instance to answer any questions you may have.

Telephone 01245 453837 or email katie.hayden@birkettlong.co.uk

This year we are celebrating our 200th anniversary

It’s not just about knowing the law, it’s also about the impact we have on our communities
What a wonderfully green month June has been! The trees and flowers have all benefited from all that rain that we had in May and suddenly, as warmer days arrived, they put on a terrific spurt and almost grew as we watched them! There is nothing quite as uplifting as seeing the young lime green leaves of an oak tree against the bright blue sky of a summer’s day.

What we don’t see, is the hundreds of small creatures that live in an Oak tree and depend upon it for food, shelter and somewhere to raise their young. Oak trees support more wildlife than any other of our native trees, being a haven for many wildlife species, including birds, mammals, insects, grubs, lichens and fungi.

Squirrels enjoy the acorns, as do jays, nuthatches, woodpeckers and rooks. Blue tits and Great tits feed on caterpillars and worms, whilst bats hide in the crevices and search for bugs.

A few of the oaks at Lake Meadows are well over a hundred years old, some still marking the original old field boundaries from farming days. Besides the usual English oaks, there is a more unusual red oak near the north-east end of the lake.

Make sure also that you don’t miss the wonderful perfume of the linden blossom on the large lime tree near the Perry Street entrance.

We are lucky in having such a variety of trees to enjoy in the park. There is a Tree Trail, in which around 40 marked trees can be identified. Collect your free map from our Information Centre, where there is also plenty of other information about the park.

A reminder that there is plenty of time for you to take photographs for our Annual Photographic Competition. If you haven’t taken part before, now is your chance to have a go! There are classes for adults and junior age groups you don’t need a special camera, just take a few shots of anything interesting in the park and enter, using the form on our website. Good money prizes will be given to the winners!

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For some time we have been referring to the next formal stage of the Local Plan process as the Examination in Public where the appointed Planning inspector will consider what has been presented and hear from those who have views on its acceptability or otherwise, such as ourselves. Although the plan was formally presented to the Government in 2019 we still don’t have a date for the EiP but we don’t now think that it can happen before January 2022. If that is the case and assuming it is agreed in some form or another it couldn’t come into force until late 2022 at the earliest.

In late 2020 the Inspector sent Basildon Council a list of questions about general aspects of the Plan which concerned him. As examples he asked why Billericay’s Green Belt seemed to be being targeted and why, given that Basildon Council didn’t intend to meet the Government’s housing targets, they hadn’t bothered to provide any reasons (for instance we think they should have said they were using Green Belt and poor infrastructure as reasons).

He indicated that if the answers were satisfactory he would proceed to the main examination hearings, if they were less satisfactory he might carry out “preliminary hearings” looking at high-level general points of concern first and if the answers were unsatisfactory he may kick the Plan back, perhaps requesting further work. When this happens it’s sometimes a “rejection in disguise”, Inspectors being reluctant to reject outright as they are under pressure to progress plans.

At the end of January 2021 Basildon Council sent back what we thought was a weak set of answers – for instance seemingly bypassing the question about why Billericay Green belt is being targeted.

Since then we have all been waiting with bated breath to see what he would say.

If we progress to preliminary or main hearings the Inspector will issue an extensive set of questions – hundreds if we are to go to main hearings – and people who responded to the Regulation 19 consultation and indicated a desire to take part in the hearings would be contacted and given six weeks to respond.

And still we wait – in March this year the Inspector told us that he would announce the way forward in the “very near future” – but the very near future has been and gone, and neither BAG/BDRA or any of our supporters who answered the consultation has heard from him.

We now know the Inspector has requested additional information and action from Basildon Council which could further delay the EiP and potentially introduce the need for more public consultation before the EiP can happen. We are concerned that key defining matters such as the housing target and borough wide housing distribution, and therefore site selection, could be open to review with no greater reassurances that the Green Belt will be used as a valid constraint.

Has the Inspector got cold feet on the Plan?

Has he come to a similar conclusion to us that the plan is amateurish, out of date and flawed?

By the time you read this we may know.

For more up to date information on the Local Plan visit our Facebook Page:-

“We Save Billericay – from Housing Developments”

We are running a new feature in the magazine and looking for local businesses who have a long history in the town to share their story. Please write and tell us yours.

A Century of Seasonings and Marinade

Unbar Rothon, one of the UK’s leading seasonings and marinades suppliers, is celebrating its century as a successful manufacturer and exporter and for more than seventy of those years it has been owned and run by the same family.

It was established in London in 1920’s and in 1948 Mr. Felix Rothon (later to be awarded an MBE) moved its headquar ters to Billericay in Essex.

Over time Unbar Rothon became internationally recognised as a leader in the business of supplying high quality seasonings and marinades to food manufacturers, caterers and butchers, with Mr. Felix Rothon’s sons, Patrick and William, joining him on the board.

Now, with two members of the next generation, Richard and Matthew, also directors, the company is leading the market sectors it serves with new seasonings and services, including the innovative Lean Blending Service.

This generates the precise blends required and delivers individual packs (anything between 100g and 26 kilograms) to the customer, thus minimising the use of storage space. Operational costs, including storing, picking, weighing and blending a multiplicity of minor ingredients are also avoided.

A big attraction is the peace of mind generated by Unbar Rothon’s taking responsibility for food safety, legality and quality issues through its assessment of all raw materials used and by its worldwide early-warning problem scanning service.

The company has streamlined the process so customers no longer have to blend their own seasonings and marinades to efficiently handle growing business.

Throughout its history Unbar Rothon has reacted (and often driven) change within the industry and in doing so has enhanced its sector leading position.
Dear Editor,

Mayflower Questions and Answers.

What flag did the Mayflower fly?

On the death of Elizabeth the 1st in 1603, James the 6th of Scotland became king of both England and Scotland in 1603 as James the 1st.

The cross of St George and the satire of St Andrew were combined in 1606 to form the first Union Jack which was declared to be the National Ensign of Great Britain by James 1st.

There was therefore a union with Scotland in 1603 and the first Union Jack was flown in 1606.

By 1620, 14 years after the first Union Jack was flown, it is likely that the Mayflower would have flown this flag.

Terence Gandy
Address supplied

The Editor contacted local Historian, Julian Whybra and the following (right)

Terence Gandy
Address supplied

Mayflower 2020 Commemoration

Of the 40 planned events in the programme, 10 actually ran, either before the pandemic struck or during lulls in the lockdown. Three postponed events appear below.

2021

Mon 2nd-Sat 14th August Billericay Tree Wardens (NOW CANCELLED)
Billericay’s Tree Heritage: a photographic exhibition celebrating our notable trees (incl. ones here in 1620).
Free event, 9.00am-5.00pm. Billericay Library.

Mon 13th September Billericay Historical and Archaeological Society Lecture. The Fold, 72 Laindon Rd., 8.00-9.30pm. Open to non-members: £2.

2022

Mon 28th February Essex Handicrafts Association Billericay Branch Concert: ‘An American Christmas’. 7.30pm United Reformed Church, Chapel St. Tickets £8 from Slipped Discs or on the door.

A Message from our Coach Trip Organisers

Hopefully we are a step nearer getting back to normal. We’re sure everyone regardless of circumstances has had their own degrees of challenges, but we do hope you have all been well. Thanks to the vaccination, we can now begin to look to the future.

Unfortunately we cannot resume our coach trips at present, due to a number of issues i.e. can we have a full coach, and running at less capacity would make the trip very costly per seat. As most venues require deposits, should we not be able to run the trip, how do we stand for refunds and lastly we are not sure how many of us would prefer to wait and see what happens when lockdown is finally lifted.

On a brighter note, summer is coming and hopefully we can look to resume our trips next year. On this note we would welcome thoughts and ideas of trips that members would be interested in us organising. Please email us resident@bdra.org

Keep safe, Kind regards. Yvonne & Kathleen.

I researched the question of the May-Flower’s flag thoroughly. Mr. Gandy is quite wrong and seems to have confused the Royal Navy with the Merchant fleet. James 1 did introduce the forerunner of our present Union Flag but it wasn’t officially adopted by the Royal Navy and flown on the mainmast until 1634. It was flown alongside red ensigns bearing St. George or St. Andrew crosses on the foremast. These national ensigns were used from 1625 until 1707.

English merchant ships like the May-Flower flew blue-white-yellow horizontally-striped flags with a cross of St. George (or St. Andrew) in the cantons on both main- and foremasts until 1620. In that year it was replaced by the red ensign with a St. George cross as illustrated in the last Resident. Pictorial evidence shows its usage from 1620 until 1707.

Regards
Julian Whybra

ENGLISH AND SCOTS ROYAL NAVIES

When James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603 he desired to replace the two ‘national’ flags used on naval ships.

Royal English Navy mainmast flag flown until 1634
Royal Scots Navy mainmast flag flown until 1634