

Leigh on Sea Town Council News

issue 03



Arts & Culture | Clubs & Societies | Schools
Churches | Council Facilities & Outside Spaces
Council Budget 2016-17

It's been great fun putting this issue together. We have a lovely article from published historian Judith Williams on Prittle Brook. Grateful to her for giving her time to writing this and for using her map in the feature on Trees in the last issue. I'm also pleased to include a piece on Dementia as my mum suffered from this awful disease. Helen Robertson, Leigh Town Councillor contributed to this. The Council committee regular items include an exciting proposal for the skate park and recreational area, really hope you get involved and let us know what you think. Just in case you wondered who was responsible for the knitted/crochet seasonal additions to our letterboxes those responsible own up and share their love for yarnbombing. Normally there is a waiting list for allotments but there are a few available, so read up on that, BirdTrack and the Orchard item. The Community Centre has some fabulous classes including fun exercises for the elderly as well as energetic Zumba. Vivien Rosier has been an enormous help as sub editor and made some great contributions.

Enjoy the summer in lovely Leigh-on-Sea

Jane Ward,
Editor.



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Front cover: Very indebted to Lynn Tait who has provided the photographs for the cover from her archive.



Calendar

(Mt. = Meeting)

All Council meetings commence at 7:30pm and are open to the public.

June

- 4-11 Leigh Art Trail
- 7 Council Mt.
- 7 Community Facilities Mt
- 14 Planning/Highways/Licen. Mt.
- 17 Farmers' Market
- 21 Enviro. & Leisure Mt.
- 23-26 Leigh Folk Festival
- 28 Planning/Highways/Licen. Mt

July

- 5 Policy & Resources Mt.
- 10 Leigh Lions Charity Duck Race
- 12 Planning/Highways/Licen. Mt.
- 15 Farmers' Market
- 19 Council Mt.
- 26 Planning/Highways/Licen. Mt.

August

- 2 Community Facilities Mt.
- 9 Planning/Highways/Licen. Mt.
- 16 Enviro. & Leisure Mt.
- 19 Farmers' Market
- 21 Maritime Festival
- 23 Planning/Highways/Licen. Mt.

September

- 4 MDAS Allotment Open Day
- 6 Policy & Resources Mt.
- 16 Farmers' Market
- 18 Leigh Regatta
- 20 Council Meeting

October

- 4 Community Facilities Mt.
- 18 Enviro. & Leisure Mt.
- 21 Farmers' Market

November

- 1 Policy & Resources Mt.
- 15 Council Mt.
- 18 Farmers' Market
- 25 Leigh Lights

December

- 6 Community Facilities Mt.
- 10 Carols on Strand Wharf
- 17 Farmers' Market
- 20 Enviro. & Leisure Mt.

EVENT NEWS

Health & Wellbeing Fair

In January the Community Centre helped residents to kick off their New Year with a healthy start, by holding its first Health & Wellbeing Fair. The free event offered taster sessions of the exercise classes at the Centre, as well as talks and workshops.

The event proved very popular with exhibitors who got the chance to share important wellbeing information. Stalls promoted different ways of staying healthy with keep fit, nutrition, weight loss and cycling advice.

Attendees to the Fair walked away with lots of information and popular stalls on the day included the Dawn Lister Therapy Centre, Slimming World and The Body Matters.

February Half-Term Events

For the February break the Centre organised a variety of events for children all under the theme of Peter Pan. The different activities included arts and crafts, drama, dancing and storytelling. Each session was completely full and excited children were thrilled to take part in the pirate and fairy themed workshops, proving that the Edwardian story is still as popular as ever.

Peter Pan arts and crafts were provided by The Art Ministry, a local charity who provide affordable art activities for less able children and adults in Essex. The Centre donated over £170 to The Art Ministry for the event, and will continue to work with them for half term events in the future.

Other collaborators for the week included Cally Davis Drama, First Steps Dance and the Inspire Theatre Collective.



Easter Half Term Events

Once again the Easter Holidays were filled with fun and affordable activities for kids. A drama workshop themed on "Matilda the Musical" delighted older children, whilst storytelling, dancing, arts and crafts and Blenheim Children's Centre helped to entertain the little ones.

The Leigh-on-Sea Wedding Fayre

On Saturday 21st May the Community Centre organised its first Wedding Fayre. Suppliers from the local area gathered to showcase their wares to brides, with cakes, flowers, photographers and more! With the help of Laceys Event Services the large rooms in the centre were beautifully decorated fit for a Wedding Ceremony and Reception. The Essex County Wedding Magazine also supplied free copies for all attending brides-to-be.

"90 for 90" Event

To celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday Leigh Town Council organised a special afternoon tea birthday party for its residents who are celebrating a 90th birthday in 2016.

The event, held on Sunday 12th June at Leigh Community Centre invited nonagenarians to enjoy tea, cake and finger sandwiches, whilst being entertained by Bob's Barbershop Boys and the U3A Ukelele Group.



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Chairman's report

We approach the end of another exciting and interesting year in the life of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, which runs from May to April.

There have been a number of new innovations including of course this magazine. We have started a project working with volunteers and, as interesting schemes arise, so our band of volunteers get stuck in to events, litter picking, decorating and much more at the Community Centre.

The Council as a whole has developed a new approach to its work, less talk and more doing! We have more than halved the number of meetings and the savings from this and other efficiencies are now filtering through and by the end of our financial year we should have freed up significant sums to plough back into real services.

Communicating with our residents has taken a top priority and we have changed the way we comment on planning applications in our area and will be developing strong practical policies involving you which hopefully will give us a bit more clout when it comes to objecting to inappropriate developments which threaten our town and also to encourage positive improvements to the public realm.

By the time you read this Strand Wharf should be complete. I hope you like it. I shan't include a picture, go down and take a look and enjoy a plate of delicious Leigh cockles as you gaze out to sea. There will be more such projects, we are already planning a community green adventure area, ambitious and still at a very early stage so we don't yet know how it will pan out but we shall be asking you for your input and ideas.

There is a serious side to our work, developing projects to enhance the working economy of our town alongside many other groups and fishermen in the Coastal Community Team, seeking grant funding

and bringing various business and cultural interests together. We also take part in meetings of many other groups affecting our area such as the Airport Consultative Group, Leigh Port Partnership to name but two.

This is your Council. The 16 councillors, none of whom receives any payment or allowance, and our staff and volunteers are all working hard for the good of Leigh and we need your support and ideas. We hold public meetings to discuss important matters as they arise in Leigh, such as the threat to our Library, and all our committee meetings (normally on a Tuesday) are open to the public who are given an opportunity to speak, so come along and see how we develop services for you and check that the best value for money is always obtained.

I love living in Leigh and being able to play my part alongside my colleagues to make Leigh an extra special place has been a great privilege.

Richard Herbert
Chairman Leigh Town Council

From the ARCHIVE

HIGH WORDS AT LEIGH AND A CHALLENGE TO FIGHT.

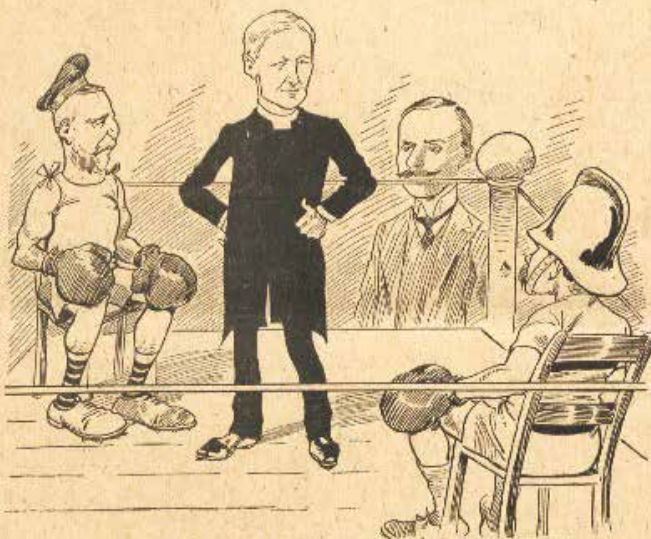
At a meeting of the Leigh Council on Wednesday, Mr. Arnold made reference to the fact that Councillor H. E. Johnson had called Councillor Meachen "a liar and a dirty dog."

Councillor H. E. Johnson, while admitting that he used the words, took exception to the way in which Councillor Arnold had introduced the matter, adding, "If Mr. Arnold will come outside and tell me this, I don't mind seeing whether I can do better than he. Whether I have sufficient sense or not, I have sufficient physical strength to 'out' him whenever he likes."

It appeared that the expression referred to was used in connection with an investigation of certain frontage charges in which Mr. S. F. Johnson was concerned.

Mr. Senior said the Council knew that the man who ought to have paid the money had left the country, and that Mr. S. F. Johnson was the victim of cruel circumstances. Mr. S. F. Johnson's reputation in Leigh was such that he could afford to ignore the accusations made against him.

OUR LEIGH CARTOON.

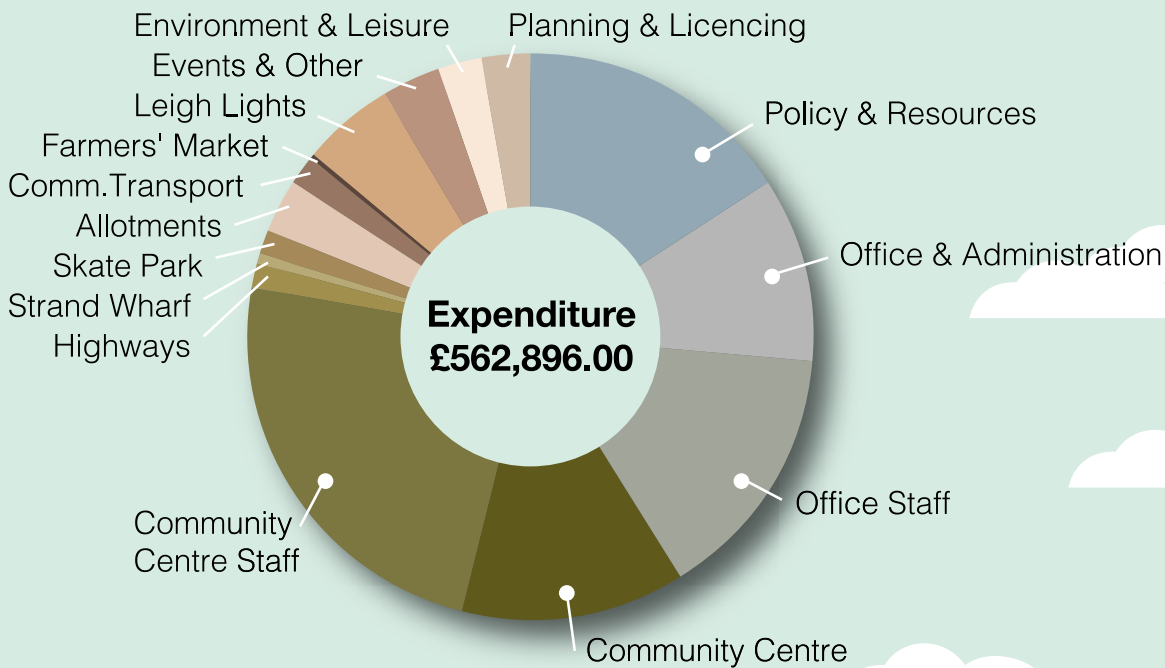
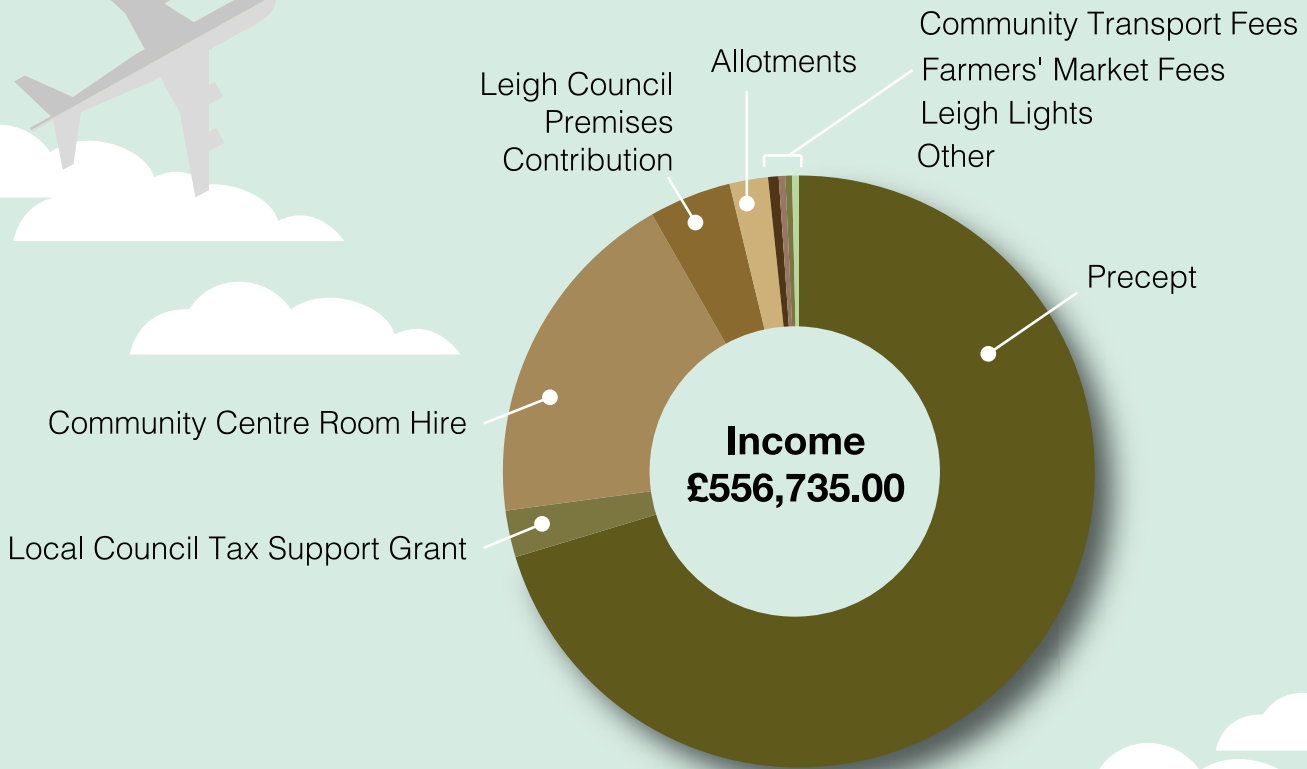


THE FIRE FIGHTER AND ONE OF THE FURIES.

The Referee (the Rev. R. S. King) introducing the rival combatants: "Gentlemen, these two members of the Council will settle their little differences in three rounds."

(It is possible that as the result of last week's "scene" at the meeting of the Leigh Urban District Council a gymnasium will be fitted up in the Council offices for the convenience of Councillors who fall out and who desire to keep fit.)

Leigh on Sea Town Council Budget 2016-17



Leigh on Sea Population 22,509

Census 2011

Detailed figures are available on the council website:
www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

Planning Report 2015-16

This committee meets twice a month, because of the timescale required for responses to SBC and high demand of applications.

The Town Council is a statutory consultee and we do spend a lot of time considering all planning applications. Most of the committee Councillors visit sites within their wards as this informs all aspects of the submitted plan such as impact on neighbours, street scene and parking.

We have looked at 363 applications in the past year alone. We try to keep in mind if the proposed extension or new build will sit comfortably with its neighbouring properties and not be out of character with other houses within that road. Generally we resist applications to demolish bungalows, this is especially important given growth in the ageing population. Living on one level accommodation beyond retirement enables many frail people to manage independently for much longer. We try to highlight issues that might not be apparent to SBC, through our local knowledge and the views of local people.

Unfortunately we do not have the final word but we always object where we believe it to be necessary and in the interest of Leigh residents. Residents who are concerned, upset, or worried about a proposed development in their roads; and where the application is large i.e. flats or a house of dense proportion, the residents of Leigh are welcome to attend and contribute at our planning meetings and encouraged where appropriate to write to Southend Planning Department with a list of their objections - it really can make a difference. It is also useful to ask your local borough councillor to have the plans 'called in' which means instead of one planning officer making the decision it will go before the Development Control Committee of 17 democratically elected Councillors who should take your views into account.

As you may know, the applicant can always go to appeal, and a government inspector arrives in the Town from another area and can override the SBC objection to the proposed plan. We do the best job we can in representing your and the Town's interests.

We also deal with licensing applications, however, SBC make the ultimate decision. Southend Borough Councillors confirm that they do take note of what we have stated in our planning objections and licensing likewise.

Before I conclude I must mention highway issues which are also included on our committee agendas, the obvious fly in the ointment is parking. Recently, we have approached Southend's Highway Department about installing a lay-by outside the Leigh Primary Health Centre on London Road, as patients of all the various doctors' surgeries and health clinics within who need dropping off or picking up informed us that the taxis have a problem here as there is no official off-road allocated space to do so. Watch this space as the Pall Mall surgery alone has 15,000 patients and a car park for approximately 10 patients. A lay-by would be appreciated by taxi companies and patients.

So rest assured residents of Leigh, we try to support you and act on your behalf whenever possible, we are here to represent you, and we endeavour to try to keep the lovely character of Leigh whenever we can. Please feel free to attend our meetings if there is an item on our agenda that concerns you, or notify our office.

Cllr. Caroline Parker

Chairman of Planning, Licensing and Highways

Community Facilities

I have the great pleasure to be Chairman of this Committee. My personal interests are in building things and for 10 years I worked as a boat builder building small wooden boats down in Old Leigh.

Community Facilities looks after the buildings and assets of the Council, the Community Centre, skate-park etc. This is all rather exciting at the moment as there are some large scale projects coming along.

The Community Centre has been a great success but it is a very old building, 1911, and is in dire need of a bit of tender loving care. We intend to refurbish this building and make it fit for the future. I hope in another hundred years it is still here serving the needs of our community. We have a number of ideas for developing the Centre, we don't intend to go mad, but there are some obvious improvements needed (as well as a new roof and windows). We shall of course be asking you what improvements

you would like to see here and we will be developing a group to seek grant funding and donations to try to keep it affordable.

The Strand Wharf project is overseen by this Committee. After many years thinking, suddenly work started and our contractors have done a great job. I may be biased but I think it looks even better than we expected and hope our visitors and residents enjoy it for many, many years and it forms an additional attraction to bring people to our Town.

Down at the skate park we have interesting plans, more of that elsewhere in the LTC news but it emphasises our need to raise funds from grants and other sources, we certainly have no intention to increase our share of your Council tax.

Richard Herbert

Chairman of Community Facilities Committee

Environment and Leisure Committee

Once again in November Leigh Town Council produced a truly memorable Night of the Lights, packed with people and events. The weather was kind and everyone had a wonderful time.

This was followed in December by our traditional Carols on Strand Wharf - a chilly but very enjoyable and magical evening with the sound of Christmas wafting out over the estuary.

Every year the Town Council reviews its events and seeks to ring the changes to keep them enjoyable and relevant.

We are now looking forward to our Annual Maritime Festival in the Old Town which will be on Sunday, 21 August - once again we celebrate our nautical heritage and our riverside position and invite you all to join us for a wonderful day.

As well as events the Committee looks at environmental issues and those that hit the headlines are inevitably dogs' mess and litter. We work with the Borough to help promote better awareness of the problem and promote safer disposal recycling and pride in our environment. Ideas for assisting with this are always welcome.

The Committee also oversees our three allotment sites and this year has worked closely with the Allotment Societies, with whom we have a very good and encouraging relationship, to maintain and enhance the sites and deal with issues relating to a wide variety of subjects which affect allotments.

All in all it is a busy Committee and I pay tribute to our Events Officer who with a very dedicated supporting team continues to innovate, inspire and amaze us with her ideas and work ethic.

Carole Mulroney
Chairman, Environment and Leisure Committee



Rampage Skate Park

I wonder how many people in Leigh are aware that Leigh once had a world class skate park 'Rampage' sited near the the station?

Sadly, it fell into disrepair partly due to funding issues and was torn down in the late 90s. Later a replacement area was constructed, this is a shadow of its former self and only really suitable for beginners. Now, owing to subsidence even this is offering a less than satisfactory experience.

A community group led by David Watson, has come forward with a proposal to replace the current park with a modern activity plaza which could also offer a dirt track for BMX riders, five-a-side football pitches, a picnic area, children's play centre and more.

This idea is very much in its early days development. We would really like to know what you think and if you would like to get involved. A working group needs to be established to make a formal application to Southend Council and to consider funding, fund raising, design etc. As I say, it's early days.... How great though to once again attract the calibre of former visitors to Rampage such as Pro Skateboarders, John Cardiel, Mark Gonzales and Tony Hawk.

Below is a rough plan of what might be possible.



If you are interested or have any comments please contact Cllrs. Ron Owen and Valerie Morgan.
council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

Spring Spectacular – 19th March

After months of careful planning Leigh Town Council hosted its Spring Spectacular on Saturday 19th March much to the delight of local families. The free event took place in Leigh Community Centre and featured a variety of entertainment and activities for children of all ages.

Party Pets were at the Centre with chickens, rabbits, hedgehogs and even some creepy crawlies for children to hold and pet. The Arts Ministry and Blenheim Children's Centre hosted fun Easter themed arts and crafts activities and Buttercup Club provided Messy Play fun. Churches Together also arranged a special Easter Storytelling film.



Local groups helped to support the event with fete style games and tombolas. Leigh Lions, Leigh Round Table, The Fisherman's Mission, Havens Hospices, Castle Point Lions, The Sycamore Fund and Leigh

Horticultural Society all donated their time to the event and helped raise money for their individual groups as well.

Children were also entertained throughout the day by Quackers, Terry the Magician and Professor Joe's Punch & Judy.

The successful family event is organised yearly by the Town Council around the Easter Holidays with the aim of producing a variety of family fun activities for local residents that are free to all. The event originally took place in Leigh Library Gardens, however this has now moved into the Centre due to the unpredictability of the weather at this time of year.



What Book Groups are reading this month

Here are some of the books that the Leigh groups are enjoying this month.

- **All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr**
A stunning book being enjoyed by several groups around the Borough
- **Appetite for Violets by Martine Bailey**
A surprising historical page-turner
- **Sunrise by Victoria Hislop**
The new title by this popular author
- **Nora Webster by Colm Toibin**
Whose other novel Brooklyn has recently been turned into an Oscar nominated film
- **Silkworm by Robert Galbraith**
is a popular crime series by the author better known as J.K Rowling. 3rd volume just published.

The only classic on the list is a Passage to India by E.M. Forster.

Among the 18 groups that collect their books from Leigh Library most are private groups, but we have 2 U3A groups, 1 WI group and 2 groups from the David Lloyd Leisure Centre.

If you would like more information about book groups

Please contact debbiewilliams@southend.gov.uk
or call 01702 534123

Book Fair – 12th March

The Centre hosted its first book fair on 12th March and it was met with roaring success. Almost 30 stalls took over the lower hall in the Centre selling a variety of antique, collectable, new, second-hand and self-written books. The fair which was free entry, raised over £250 from stall fees to put towards the "Friends of the Community Centre Fund." This money goes towards putting more community events on in the Centre and general upkeep of the building.

Cllr Carole Mulroney stated that "being an avid book lover I was delighted to see the sheer enthusiasm and interest in the fair. It's great to know that in this age of technology, that there are still plenty of people who love a good book. We are planning more fairs in the Community Centre and thank everyone for their support"

The next Book Fair at the Centre will be held on Saturday 24th September.

Contact Leigh Town Council to enquire about having a stall.

Spring Art Competition

Leigh Town Council recently launched its first Spring Art Competition, in lieu of the traditional Easter Bonnet Contest as part of its Spring Spectacular held on 19th March at Leigh Community Centre.

Some fabulous entries were received under 3 different age categories and the judging panel had a difficult time choosing the overall winner for each age group.

The 3 official judges were Leigh Town Councillor Jane Ward, who previously worked in Art education, Bronwyn Oldham the organiser of the Leigh Art Trail and John Adams, an Art teacher from Belfairs Academy. The judges ended up also choosing 4 entrants as Highly Commendable as they had such a hard time picking the winners.

The 3 winners each received a goody bag of prizes, including arty items kindly donated by Laurence Matthews in Southend, an Adventure Island wristband and family photo voucher from Barret & Coe, as well as an Easter egg.

Winners Lucy Booker aged 5 and Leo Folley, aged 6 were able to attend the event to be presented with their prizes by Richard Herbert, Chairman of Leigh Town Council.

“

Hello, this weekend we attended your spring spectacular and it was! Both my children and I had a fabulous time with all the amazing crafts, very enthusiastic, very friendly, helpful assistants great ideas, we loved seeing the hens, rabbits, even holding a bearded dragon! So just wanted to say well done and thank you for all your hard work organising such a great day. We can't wait till the next one!

”



The Leigh Music and Drama Festival

The Leigh Music and Drama Festival is returning this year! Taking place at the Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherlands Blvd, Leigh on Sea, between 9th June and 10th July, it promises the opportunity for young performers from 5 to 18 years of age to show off their talent in speech, drama and music.

As well as providing individuals the chance to shine in front of their communities, the Leigh Music and Drama Festival is keen to encourage local schools to take part in the month long programme, particularly with the School Choirs competitions. With a focus on the BBC's Ten Pieces initiative - aimed at opening up the world of classical music to children, and inspiring them to create their own artistic responses to ten pieces of music - Leigh Music and Drama Festival is thrilled to be offering TryOut opportunities, giving class groups chance to show the results of their creative work to the community and get feedback from professionals on their efforts!

In the past, the Festival has provided a stage for internationally acclaimed concert pianist, Benjamin Grosvenor, and local violinist Eliza Nagle, former winner of the Edna Head Award, who has gone on to recently win the District Round of the Rotary Young Musician of the Year competition.

This year, the Drama competitions will take place between 9 - 11th June, Piano and Strings 17 - 19th June, Wind and Brass 23 - 26th June, and Singing 1 - 3rd July. The Prize Winners' concert will be held on Sunday 10th July. The date for the Edna Head Award is to be confirmed.

More information on the Festival can be found at our website

www.leighmusicfestival.co.uk



Want to 'grow your own' but have no garden or not enough space?

There are currently 18 allotment plots available at Manchester Drive. There are two sites on this enormous patch of fertile land, which are always busy with lots of friendly allotment holders willing to offer advice and help.



Things you might need to think about:

- Tools and equipment you might need
- Preparing the soil - this will vary when you acquire your allotment but will involve weeding and applying nutrients
- What to grow for your first cropping?
- Whether planting seeds or buying young plants?
- How organic do you want to be?
- Making sure you can keep an eye on growth and picking crops when they are at their freshest and tastiest
- Maintaining your plot all year round



LEIGH FARMERS' MARKET

Leigh Farmers' Market was established in June 2000, the first of its kind in south east Essex and two of the traders have attended the market for almost all of its sixteen years. Suzanne and Brian White joined the market in 2001; they run a herd of around 100 pedigree Beef Shorthorn cattle on their 300 acre Highfield Farm at Althorne, near Chelmsford. Established in 1975 they attend many markets in Essex and bring a wide range of beef cuts and also offer a selection of home made steak and kidney pies.

Paul Stone of Rhyne Park Farm at Bures, just over the border in Suffolk, is another long term supporter of the market having first attended in the early 2000s. He and his wife Liz run a herd of around 150 pigs, a mixture of Gloucestershire Old Spots,

British Saddlebacks and Middle Whites on 45 acres of grass paddocks. The pigs' diet of cereal and root crops is free from additives and GM products. The Farm has its own butchery to produce the varied cuts of pork on offer, together with its own sausages which come in a range of appetising flavours. Paul also offers oven ready chickens and a small selection of lamb products from Thorringtons Farm at Layer Marney who had a stall at the market for several years.

DON'T FORGET

The market takes place in Leigh Community Centre at 9:00am-12 noon, on the 3rd Friday every month from February to November. December's Christmas Market on the 17th starts at 8:30am.



If you have been wondering what it's like to have an allotment but never got any further than thinking about it, now is the time to be inspired because the growing season is in full swing.

The Manchester Drive Allotments are open each weekend, 10.00 to 12.00.

Call in to the allotments shop. Ask to be shown round and maybe find an allotment that's just right for you. And while you're there, drop into the allotments cafe for a coffee or tea and perhaps a bacon butty.

The Allotments Open Day gives another opportunity to look round the site, while enjoying live music, craft and produce stalls, and of course great food and drink, along with children's activities including a dig-your-own potato competition. It's on Sunday, September 4th, 11.00 to 3.00, when everyone is welcome. Proceeds will go to support Macmillan Nursing.

The idea of having an allotment may just start to grow on you!

For more advice visit the allotments on Saturday mornings or check out The National Allotment Society website (www.nsalg.org.uk)





A survey of bird life on local allotments

South East Essex Organic Gardeners – SEEORG – are promoting recording bird life on local allotments; the observations being recorded online using BirdTrack, which is provided by a partnership of several ornithological organisations.

The results should help to measure the contribution allotment sites make to supporting urban wildlife. SEEORG knew wildlife observation with ad hoc recording was found on some allotments and many sites had measures to encourage wildlife.

In September 2015, they approached a few allotment sites around South Essex asking if they were interested in a survey to record bird life on and around their sites. During autumn 2015, SEEORG liaised with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) about bird surveys in the allotment environment and, by the end of 2015, they had opted to concentrate on using BirdTrack.

Everyone with an allotment can observe birds but, as the survey requires some bird identification skills, hopefully a few experienced “birders” can be recruited and all involved can hone their “bird-spotting” abilities while having some fun at the same time.

If participating in a survey sounds too formal, then there is a “casual observation” approach to get a feel for the idea and work out what best suits a particular allotment site.

Casual observations can be made all day by several people, who may probably observe some of the same birds, whereas the survey would be a snapshot with care to avoid multi-counting.

One or two “administrators” will enter the data into BirdTrack from observations passed by email, word-of-mouth, SMS, FaceBook, Twitter or even post.

BirdTrack observations can be downloaded in both summary and detail so that the survey group can publish the numbers and species of birds observed on paper for the Clubhouse/Cafe or electronically for website or social media.

For more info and links to BTO and BirdTrack, please see the SEEORG website at <http://seeog.org.uk> (enter the word ‘Birdtrack’ in ‘Search Site’ on RHS).

Calendar Events: What SEEORG is doing this year

‘Group Night’ - social and presentations -
Monday 18 July, Monday 19 September and Monday 21 November.

Saturday 8 October: Apple Day at St. Laurence Orchard, 11:00 to 15:00

For further details, please contact SEEORG’s secretary, Carole Shorney: 01702 201914
caroleshorney@hotmail.com • www.seeog.org.uk



Essex Wildlife Trust



As we move forward into summer it is worth remembering the windy and wet winter that we have just experienced if only for its potential impact on our wildlife.

Many areas around the country saw devastating floods which have ruined people’s homes and livelihoods. The impact on wildlife is just as bad. In flooded fields the small animal life would have been wiped out which will have a major impact on those further up the food chain. Spring is an exciting time in the countryside as it is never certain just what will happen. Did Cuckoos return to Two Tree Island? They overwinter in a far from safe area in Southern Africa and have to fly over the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to get to our small island in the Thames.

Did we see the return of Nightingales again and were we able to listen to their unique song? Hopefully our regular visitors, Whitethroats and Black Caps found their way to us along with my favourite harbinger of spring, the Skylark. Nothing is certain in this “El Nino” year with strange weather patterns around the globe. At the North end of Leigh-on-Sea lies Belfairs Woodland Centre, the home of the rare Heath Fritillary Butterfly. Last year, despite massive efforts to provide a rich environment for these creatures, numbers were low as they were for most species across the UK. With the wet winter what impact will this have on this year’s numbers? Why not get out and about in these natural places and see if you can see and hear some of our amazing wildlife.



Leigh Allotments Orchard Group

David Hammond

Having set up the orchard in 2003 and decided to restrict the range of trees as far as possible to Essex-bred varieties it might seem a simple job to just go out and buy them from fruit tree suppliers but it is in fact a bit of a minefield out there.



Over the years many varieties have been superseded by later, better types and have disappeared from dealers lists, and many of them from any known location. Many varieties not normally sold commercially can still be obtained from the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale, near Faversham in Kent by special order, and more recently from the East of England Apples and Orchard Project (EEAOP) a charity group which looks after the indigenous top fruit of six East Anglian counties, including Essex.

Examples of 'lost' varieties are much sought-after and over the years I have been persuaded to buy two such trees for the orchard, a Red James Grieve and a Waltham Abbey Seedling. However, I later discovered that EEAOP had investigated these and found them to be not what was proclaimed: the Red James Grieve was a version developed in Holland, and the Waltham Abbey Seedling was in fact a Hambling Seedling from Bedfordshire. We have kept both trees, and although the Waltham Abbey has not done much, the Red James Grieve is actually one of our best croppers.

One of our pear trees has a suspicious name, Suffolk Thorn. In spite of its name, since Victoria times it has been accepted as an Essex-bred variety as it was apparently raised at Clavering Hall near Saffron Walden by an Andrew Arcedeckene. However, recent research has shown that the Arcedeckene family seat was, in fact, Glevering Hall near Wickham Market, over the border in Suffolk!

So it just shows, you cannot be too careful when trying to buy rare fruit trees.

We are always looking for new volunteers: anyone interested in helping to look after the orchard, and as a result getting a share of the crop, can contact me through Leigh Town Council.



More Mud than Glastonbury!

Artist in Residence

Working in and with the Community

Leigh Town Council's operation of the Community Centre has opened up a wealth of new and exciting events and facilities for the people of Leigh - and there's more.

The Town Council will soon be interviewing applicants for the position of Artist in Residence at the Centre. This is not a paid post but offers the opportunity for a local artist (art in its widest sense) to take up residence in the Centre for up to 12 months and work in tandem with the Council and various groups who both use the Centre and in the wider Town to enhance the Town's already wonderful artistic community.

We hope the Artist in Residency will, year on year, extend a welcome to a wide variety of different art forms within the Centre and part of the remit will be to produce a programme of art-related offers to all ages and abilities as well as an opportunity to further the artist's own career and art form.

The Artist in Residence will also work with the Council to continually refresh and enliven our Affordable Art Wall in the Centre which has been very successful in homing exhibitions for local artists. At the end of their tenure, Leigh Town Council will invite each Artist in Residence to create a legacy piece to leave for the community, this will be funded by the Council using a reserve provided by the studio rental.

So we are looking to a bright and colourful future as part of the Town Council's work in all aspects of the community.



The largest FREE Folk Festival in the country celebrates its 25th year June 23rd-26th 2016!

Leigh Folk Festival began as a one day event back in 1992 as the National Music Day, a dream instigated by none other than Rolling Stone, Mick Jagger, and Tim Renton, MP, the Arts Minister at the time.

Over those 25 years LEIGH'S little soiree has grown and grown. Now boasting a four-day event with more stages and more venues clamouring to support a refreshingly diverse and eclectic programme of music, dance, story-telling and poetry, the Leigh Folk Festival has rightly earned a reputation as the "little GEM" in Southend's busy itinerary of entertainment. From the local fete atmosphere of Leigh's delightful Library Gardens on the Saturday to the buzzing, bustling cobbles of the Old Town's Cockling village on the Sunday.

What is amazing about the continued pull and success of Leigh's Folk Festival is:

- the whole event is planned, organised and run by unpaid volunteers;
- all the local bands, dance groups involved give their time and talent free of charge;
- virtually all the entertainment on view is FREE to the wandering punter;
- we have MORE mud than Glastonbury but we keep it the right side of the sea wall!

As a FREE Festival, the event can only survive year by year due to the generosity of YOU, the good old general public with the pennies you put into the red collecting tins at each year's Festival.

So, in order to make the 25th a real BONANZA and to attract some top performers to celebrate OUR special "little GEM" we need your pennies!

Thank you! As ever in music

Mickie D (Mick Davison), Chairman - Leigh Folk Festival



Sat 4th - Sat 11th June 2016

(venue opening times vary)

Now in its 19th year, the annual Leigh Art Trail this year plays host to over 40 practicing artists, ceramicists, jewellers, sculptors, painters and photographers, all working locally and showcasing an exciting and diverse range of contemporary art. This year we are pleased to announce 8 guest artists who have been invited to exhibit their beautiful work in Leigh-on-Sea as part of the event. Set over 30 different venues, many of which are independent businesses, the Trail really does highlight our dedicated community, working to sustain the dynamic creative buzz that best describes Leigh-on-Sea. For one week annually, artists and businesses work together to provide an inspiring day out for the whole family as well as showcasing art that you can buy for a lasting memoir.



Originally set up by a community of high-spirited local artists wanting to provide an outlet for their work in a setting meaningful to where it was created, the Leigh Art Trail was the first of its kind in the East of England. Because of the large number and high quality of practising artists in the Town, many people now refer to Leigh-on-Sea as the St. Ives of the East. The event is much loved by both residents and tourists, and we are proud to showcase the ever growing creative community that continues to thrive locally.

The Leigh Art Trail is part of the county-wide project 'Essex Summer of Art', showcasing a whole summer of art exhibitions and events throughout Essex. Collect a brochure from venues along the Broadway, Leigh Road and Old Leigh to start planning your day. Brochures are also available to collect from Leigh Community Centre.

Spreading The Yarn Love - yarnbombing

We are tyrannical yarn enthusiasts also known as The Craft Club Yarnbombers, namely Helen Thomas, Emma Curley, Claire Whitehead, Gabby Atkins and Rebecca Burton. We have been yarnbombing our local community and surrounding areas since 2013.

We stumbled upon yarnbombing after teaching ourselves to crochet at the beginning of 2013. Whilst spending our lunch time googling easy patterns to follow we found an article on yarnbombing which left us all intrigued.

So after a little discussion and some late night crocheting we all got together one wintry evening and headed down to Southend seafront to leave our little yarnbombs for the public to find. Everyone loved them, we had some wonderful feedback which encouraged us to continue. Our next yarnbomb was a poppy garland, which we left at a church in Benfleet. It looked beautiful and tied in with Remembrance Day. We featured in the Echo newspaper and our following on Facebook grew.

We then decided to be more ambitious and go bigger with our yarnbombs and display them on postboxes, with our first Christmas scene installed in Leigh-on-Sea. This was so well received by the local community and thank yous and selfies posted on our Facebook confirmed this.

In August 2014 we went on to beat a Guinness World Record for the most crocheted sculptures in one place. Through our Facebook page we reached people across the world and people sent items from as far away as Japan and America. We placed all 13,388 crocheted items in the garden of Little Havens Children's Hospice. The children, parents and staff at Little Havens were delighted and the whole garden was turned into an enchanting land from Enid Blyton's Faraway Tree. The items were then donated to the children for sensory play and some were sold to raise funds for Little Havens. We were thrilled to help raise over £1000 for Little Havens.

We absolutely love what we do and when we yarnbomb the feedback we get is always so positive. Its great to see how much pleasure can be created from a little bit of yarn. This will always encourage us to think of new yarnbombing projects and raising money for charities along the way is just the icing on the cake.

We hope from our yarnbombs we can ignite a spark in others to get creative in their community. Teach yourself a craft, make it a hobby, get together with like minded friends and create something that makes you and other people happy.



The Craft Club Yarnbombers - left to right - Helen Thomas, Gabby Atkins, Rebecca Burton, Claire Whitehead and Emma Curley.





Elizabeth and Harry Smith, Elizabeth contributed squares to our giant Christmas tree.

If you want to try yarnbombing here are a few tips:

1. Do some brainstorming for ideas, are there any important dates coming up in your community, e.g. Easter Egg Hunts, Art Festivals or bigger celebrations like the Queen's Birthday?
2. Look for free patterns online; we like Ravelry and Pinterest.
3. Check out your local charity shops or drop into your local sewing shop for yarn, you can also meet great people to help and inspire you further there.
4. Create - make your item, be it a small garland/bunting or a big Easter Egg.
5. Get together with friends and YARNBOMB, pick your location carefully, you want somewhere it will be safe, where people will see it and it meets the audience it's made for. We find the train stations great as it cheers people up on their way to work.
6. Sit back and enjoy the reaction your yarnbomb gets.



Bonchurch Outdoor Gym

In addition to a fabulous children's play space and tennis court there is now a play space for grown ups found a short distance from the London Road off Station Road due north.

If you aren't aware of this lovely green space I recommend you check out the variety of gym equipment waiting to be used. I'm really surprised that personal trainers and boot camp trainers are not monopolising the multiple variety of exercise structures, maybe they are but not whilst I'm there. I've been trying to meet people using the various items but with no luck thus far so the accompanying photograph simply shows what is there waiting to be used. Mrs Pat Williams who describes herself as a senior citizen expressed in a letter she sent to the Leigh Town Council last June how she and three generations of her family have enjoyed 'keeping in trim'. She told me how her son, who is very keen on personal fitness encouraged his mum to use the gym and showed her how to make the most of each exercise regime. So now that the weather has improved there is no excuse, let's see as many of you having a great time as well as helping keeping your bodies flexible absolutely for free.....no gym fees at all!

Dear Sir,

I just wanted to thank Leigh and Southend Councils for installing the outside gymnasium in Bonchurch Park.

I use it regularly and as a senior citizen it certainly keeps me trim! When my family come to stay there are three generations of us enjoying ourselves.

Thank you so much.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Williams (Mrs)



'Move it or lose it' – keeping active and meeting new people

Leigh Community Centre hosts a wide variety of classes for people who wish to keep fit and active, irrespective of age and experience.

The Centre is friendly and welcoming. It offers more than just classes. Lorna and Lottie's café is an ideal place to meet up with your classmates for a restoring drink and a tasty bite to eat!

Here is a selection of classes currently running at the Centre to whet your appetite:

Chair Yoga

Yoga is for everyone no matter what age or ability, you do not need to be flexible to start practicing yoga. A yoga class consists of breathing exercises, yoga postures and meditation. It has so many benefits:

- Improves muscle tone
- Improves strength and flexibility
- Improves balance
- Improves co-ordination
- Promotes a sense of calm
- Reduces anxiety
- Promotes relaxation
- Improves lung function
- Improves focus and concentration

It is so important to keep the body moving, particularly as we start to get older as the saying goes 'if you don't use it you lose it'. Practising yoga is a great way of doing this, it is gentle and non competitive, you work at your own pace in your own time. It has so many benefits apart from the physical ones. It helps balance mind, body and spirit.

I make yoga inclusive but offering various classes, chair yoga on a Thursday afternoon for the less mobile, gentle but still challenging plus classes for special needs and learning difficulties and classes for children and for adults.

Details: Keeley Beech
www.yoga4all.co.uk



Seated Yoga

The class is suitable for all abilities but particularly for those who are recovering from surgery or who have mobility, back or joint problems. The class will appeal to those who would like to take part in classical yoga postures, breathing and relaxation techniques, but for one reason or another, they feel that a standard yoga class is not suitable for them. All participants remain seated during the session and there is a focus on gentle exercise of joints, stretching and breath awareness.

The contact for the session is Jo Thomas. She is a qualified yoga teacher and holds a BWY Diploma in yoga teaching.

The start and finish times are 09.30 - 10.30 on Saturdays. The classes continue through school holidays.

The cost for each session is £6 - there is no need to book.



Qi Gong class

The traditional Chinese exercise system Qi Gong has returned to the Leigh Community Centre. Leigh-based, Qi Gong and Tai Chi teacher Michael Baker has started a new day-time class.

He told Leigh on Sea Town Council News: 'The Community Centre is a great venue for classes and students were very keen to return, because it is such a convenient and friendly place to visit'.

Qi Gong is a form of gentle and low impact exercise composed of repeated movements, often stretching the body, building awareness of how the body moves through space. The postures create a relaxed combination of stillness and strength in mind and body that begins to change the patterns in the body, strengthening the whole system.

Benefits include:

- Cultivating deep relaxation
- Increasing body awareness
- Improving body stability, flexibility and body alignment

These movements make Qi Gong a superior health and wellbeing practice. They also differentiate Qi Gong from most forms of exercise in the West that often emphasise prolonged cardiovascular movements (such as in running and biking) or focus on muscular strength training (such as weight training).

Details: Michael Baker, email: michael.baker53@btinternet.com

www.sites.google.com/site/essexqigong

Health and exercise

In the modern world, opportunities for physical activity have become limited due to agricultural, technological and social changes that have progressively removed the need for activity from our daily lives.

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (accounting for 6% of deaths globally). Regular physical activity reduces the risk of all causes of mortality, coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, some cancers and depression, as well as bringing many positive benefits for psychological health and well-being.

The benefits of regular physical activity have been clearly set out across life. In particular, for adults, doing thirty minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity on at least five days a week helps to prevent and manage over twenty chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health problems and musculoskeletal conditions.

The strength of the relationship between physical activity and health outcomes persists throughout people's lives, highlighting the potential health gains that could be achieved if more people become more active throughout life.

Older age is characterised by increasing risk and incidence of coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer and obesity. In addition, retaining physical and cognitive function becomes a major challenge, as well as the avoidance of debilitating mental illnesses such as depression and dementia. Older adults are also at greatly increased risk of falling with resultant fractures and disability.

Physically active adults aged 65 years and over have higher levels of cardio-respiratory fitness and physical function, improved disease risk factor profiles and lower incidence of numerous chronic diseases than those who are inactive. Engaging in physical activity carries very low health and safety risks for most older adults. In contrast, the risks of poor health as a result of inactivity are very high.

Elders Inspired

Elders Inspired is a new class running at Leigh Community Centre on Wednesdays 10-11am. This class is ideal for residents who are looking for a gentle exercise class with a difference. Taught by a qualified personal trainer and Postural Stability Instructor, Elders Inspired aims to help people stay healthy and also to help to improve participants quality of life through the use of gentle weight training, stability and balance exercises which have been proven to reduce the risk of falling and raise awareness.

Some participants have completed the Staying Steady programme and have found this class an ideal progression and maintenance programme once their 16 weeks were complete, although this is not a requirement for this class. All participants are encouraged to start at a comfortable level and gradually build up as strength, mobility and balance improve. The class is fun and friendly with exercises and movements accompanied by memorable hits including those from the 40s, 50s and 60s. There is a chance to try new dance/movement styles from around the world and through the ages as part of the programme. At the end of the class participants can choose to meet for a cuppa and a chat in the Centre café. Classes cost £4/week and include use of all resources.

"I really look forward to coming into class and have really noticed a difference, at first I was using a walker but as my strength and fitness have improved I have been able to stop using this and walk confidently down the high street once more" Brenda-Participant

"I look forward to coming into class, I feel the exercises really help me and I have made some lovely new friends." Val- Participant.

"Once the Staying Steady classes had ended I felt it was so important to keep going because if we do not use it we will lose it!" Peter- Participant

For more information Valerie,
email: val.herron@talktalk.net



Yogability

My class is what I call Yogability, I am an Exercise Referral Specialist as well as a Yoga teacher.

I have taught countless clients for the past 30 years many of who have had physical conditions; I had one lady who was blind.

My passion is to build the confidence of my clients to improve strength, flexibility and balance in order to lead a more active, pain and stress free life.

When I ask my clients what they get from our class they say:

- They feel energized and bodily aware
- Their pain has decreased
- They have learnt to manage conditions
- They feel more confident
- They have had fun - we do laugh a lot which is so important

Councillor Valerie Morgan enjoys Lorraine's classes. She said 'Lorraine Nicol runs her Yogability class at the Community Centre on Friday mornings. The emphasis is on maintaining and improving flexibility, strength and balance. Lorraine tailors the class to each student's needs and they rapidly see an initial improvement which is then built on. A class to be recommended.'

For more details
email: lorrainenicol05@hotmail.co.uk



Inspire Theatre Collective

Inspire Theatre Collective runs a session on Monday evenings 7-9pm at Leigh Community Centre for people who would like to try or enjoy taking part in theatre and film projects.

The sessions will help to build confidence, develop a range of skills across the performing arts and provide an alternative opportunity to build up fitness and make new friends. Participants have the option and opportunity to work towards a range of community projects, events and festivals with the profits from performances being donated to local and national charities.



This friendly performing arts group is open to all and no experience is necessary. Sessions reflect the projects being worked on at the time and can include acting, singing, movement and dance, film, re-enactment, optional stage combat, drama games and improvisation. Trips and additional opportunities are also organised where relevant.

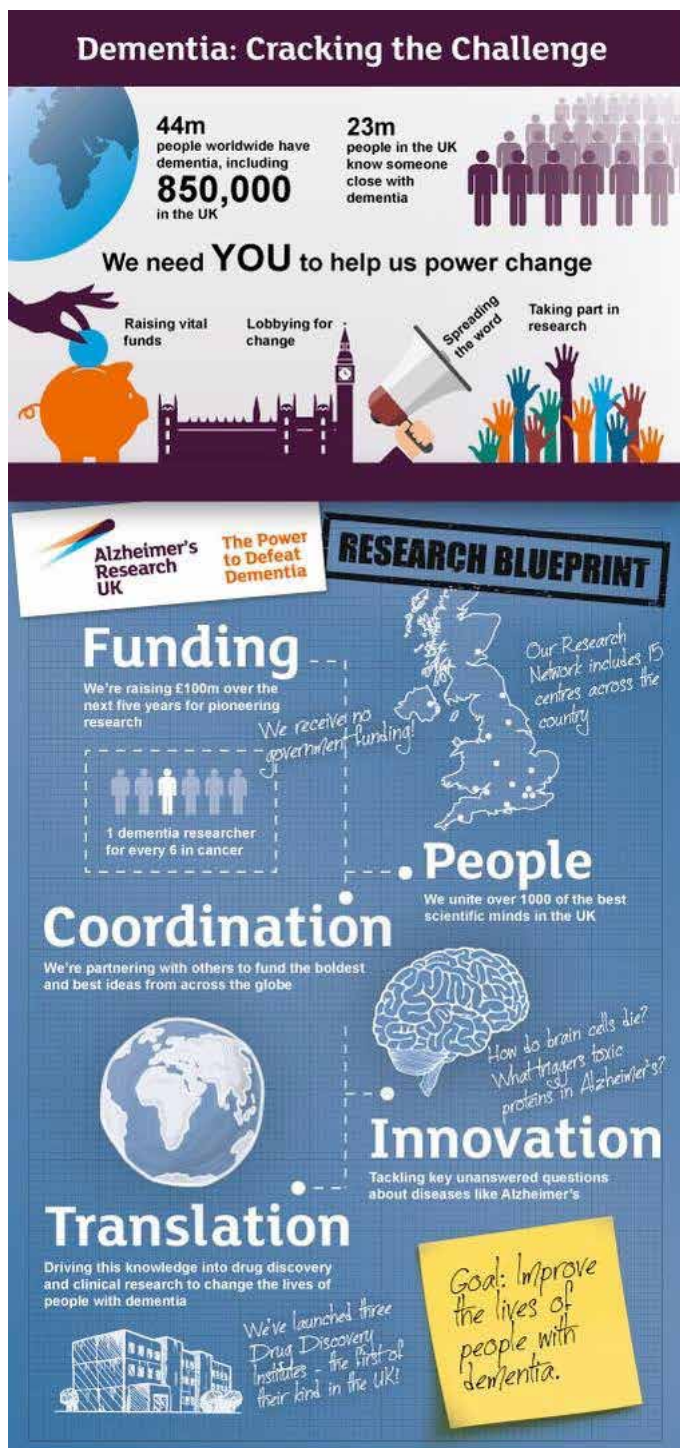
The group works across all styles and genres using live, improvised and filmed performance. The group encourages members to bring their ideas and creativity and in many cases have developed these into performance projects from script to stage!

The group is currently working on a Back to the 1950s piece based on memories and recollections of the 1950s to be performed in Southend on Saturday 3rd September 2016. Profits from this performance will be donated to Southend Hospitals Bosom Pals appeal. Residents are invited to jot down a memory of the era and hand it into the Centre reception or feel free to book into a session to find out more about the project, learn some basic jive and sing along to some 50s hits. The session is open to people of all ages and abilities. Sessions cost £10/2hrs or £5.00 one hour option and include all resources etc.



For more information or to try a session contact:
Inspire Theatre Collective
Email: inspiretheatrecollective@gmail.com

What is the Southend Dementia Action Alliance?



Nationally, the Dementia Action Alliance is a movement for social change made up of organisations from the public, private and charitable sectors committed to transforming the quality of life of people living with dementia in the UK and the millions who care for them. Each alliance member produces an Action Plan to bring about improvements for anyone affected by dementia that they are directly or indirectly in contact with. All members have also introduced the dementia friends initiative into their workplace and created hundreds of dementia friends throughout Southend.

From Shoeburyness to Leigh and everywhere in between, members of the public, businesses, services and community groups are working in partnership with Southend Borough Council to make Southend-on-Sea a 'Dementia Friendly' Town. Members include people affected by dementia, emergency services, supermarkets, banks and pharmacies, health and social care, care homes and home care agencies, leisure and wellbeing services, theatres, the UK's first dementia friendly airport and dementia care and support providers. All members and action plans can be viewed at www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances/8940_southend_dementia_action_alliance

Dementia Friends:

The Dementia Friends initiative aims to make everyday life better for people with dementia by changing the way people think, talk and act. It is about giving people an understanding of dementia and the small things that could make a difference to people living with dementia in the community. A dementia friend learns a little bit more about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action. People with dementia sometimes need a helping hand to go about their daily lives and feel included in their local community. Dementia Friends is giving people an understanding of dementia and the small things they can do that can make a difference to people living with dementia - from helping someone find the right bus to spreading the word about dementia.

Hundreds of people in Southend are already dementia friends, but we would like to see everyone wearing the little blue badge. To register for a session please visit www.dementiafriends.org or contact Alzheimer's Society, Southend on 01702 345156 or by email: southend@alzheimers.org.uk

Dementia Friendly Communities:

On the 1st March Southend applied to become a dementia friendly community. All communities that register for the dementia friendly communities recognition process will be formally working towards meeting the foundation criteria for being dementia friendly. The definition of a dementia friendly community is a city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported and confident they can contribute to community life. In a dementia friendly community people will be aware of and understand dementia and people with dementia feel included and involved, and have choice and control over their day to day lives.

If you would like information about services for people affected by dementia or the Southend Dementia Action Alliance please contact Nancy Smith, Strategy & Commissioning Officer for Dementia, Integrated Commissioning Team, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council at: nancysmith@southend.gov.uk or visit our website www.southendinfopoint.org

DAA Southend
Dementia Action Alliance





Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers.

We provide information and support to people with any form of dementia and their carers through our publications, National Dementia Helpline, website, and around 3,000 local services. We campaign for better quality of life for people with dementia and greater understanding of dementia. We also fund an innovative programme of medical and social research into the cause, cure and prevention of dementia and the care people receive.

Key Messages:

- Alzheimer's Society champions the rights of people living with dementia and the millions of people who care for them.
- Alzheimer's Society needs to raise money to help people live well with dementia today and for research to find a cure for tomorrow.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain and can affect anyone.
- Dementia is caused by disease of the brain; symptoms include loss of memory, confusion and problems with speech and understanding. It is progressive and eventually terminal.
- Dementia can happen to anyone and there is currently no cure. But with the right support, people can live well with dementia.

What we do at Southend

The Alzheimer's Society provides a Dementia Support Service for people who have recently been diagnosed with dementia. From diagnosis onwards, our services are here every step of the way.

Carers and relatives may need information and support too, because dementia affects not only the person diagnosed, but also those around them.

The Dementia Support Service offers the opportunity to ask questions and talk about your concerns to someone who understands how you are feeling.

You can meet with us in our office or in your own home. We can provide free, accurate, clear and up-to-date information on all aspects of dementia and provide information about services, groups and activities that may be of interest, both now and in the future.

No two people diagnosed with dementia ever react identically, nor do their families. Our service helps each person to be supported and plan for the future in their own way.

Alzheimer's Society in Southend offers the following services:

Dementia Café

Held twice a month, this drop in café is a place for people with dementia and their carers to share information and experiences. Often with guest speakers and always with a cup of tea.

Activity Groups

A variety of groups offering exercise, games, crafts or reminiscing to encourage stimulation and inclusion.

Singing for the Brain

A stimulating group activity for people in the early to moderate stages of dementia and their carers which can help with general well-being and confidence. You can join in the songs as much or as little as you like.

Peer Support Groups

Support for carers and families in small facilitated groups.

Dementia Support Workers

Our Dementia Support Workers give personalised practical and emotional support to people with dementia, their carers and families.

Advocacy Service

Our Advocacy service helps people to express their views, to access information and services and secure their rights.

For more information about any of our services, please get in touch

**Alzheimer's Society
Southend Office, Suite 1 Royce House, 630-634
London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SSO 9HW**

T: 01702 345156

E: southend@alzheimers.org.uk

www.alzheimers.org.uk



Leigh Road Baptist Church - Oasis Coffee House

There are many great cafés and restaurants in Leigh, but the Oasis Coffee House on Leigh Road is a bit different. At first glance you might just see a coffee house with comfy sofas and tempting cakes, but Oasis is owned and managed by Leigh Road Baptist Church, and seeks to provide opportunities for people to build community together.

The suspended meal scheme has already been featured in LTC News, so readers are already aware that you can donate money in Oasis to buy a meal for someone suffering from food poverty in the local area. Vouchers are sent to various agencies in the Borough, including the Leigh distribution point of the Southchurch Foodbank, and some families have been able to come in for a free meal. Over the past few months we have got to know several homeless people who have become regular customers, welcomed by name and invited to sit down, relax, have a free meal and shelter from the elements for as long as they like.

Most people living in Leigh are not suffering this level of need, but many people want some company or the opportunity to explore a new hobby. On Tuesday afternoons the craft group can be seen drawing, sewing, knitting and crocheting while enjoying a cuppa and a chat. On Wednesday afternoons the reading group congregates in Oasis to read short stories and poems together and discuss life, the universe and everything, while the 'drop-in for retired people' enjoy a free tea or coffee and a chinwag. On Thursday mornings the life and faith discussion group attracts those who want to explore the spiritual side of life.

Oasis aims to be a place where everyone, whatever their beliefs, can receive hospitality, help others and enjoy life together.

Oasis Coffee House

189-191 Leigh Road, Leigh on Sea, SS9 1JE
Tel. 01702 471873 www.lrbcc.org.uk/oasis

twitter: @oasiscafeleigh

facebook: OasisTheCoffeeHouse



Fairtrade and Fabulous!

Oasis also plays host to some inspiring visitors from time to time. During the recent Fairtrade Fortnight, the Southend-on-Sea Fairtrade Borough Network held a great afternoon in the coffee lounge allowing customers and visitors to meet the inspirational Patrick Kaberia Muthaura from the Michimikuru Tea Company in Kenya on the Fairtrade Foundation producer tour.

Patrick spoke about how the Fairtrade premium has helped his community build a school to give children a future and a maternity hospital with rural ambulance, helping to save lives, as well as stemming land degradation by helping to plant more trees to stop the soil washing away and helping to prevent flooding. This is a tangible sustainable development occurring as a result of consumers choosing Fairtrade in this country.

Patrick was such a lovely man, whose enthusiasm for Fairtrade was contagious. He said that the choice we make when choosing and asking for products with the Fairtrade Mark is felt by himself and his family and many others around the world. Choosing Fairtrade gives people a hope and a future. This is why Oasis and many other establishments in Leigh-on-Sea choose Fairtrade products. If your local does not, ask them why not!

www.fairtradeleigh.org.uk

facebook.com/SOSFairtrade

twitter.com/SOSFairtrade

info@fairtradeleigh.org.uk



The Historic Prittle Brook

by Judith Williams

A highlight of my school year in the late-1960s was the annual discovery that the Prittle Brook had overflowed its banks. I didn't bother to calculate that this happened at the same time every year; I just knew that "sometimes" my walk to school down Eastwood Road would be punctuated by a paddle where brook covered both the footpath and road, often reaching well up my six, seven, eight-year-old shins. If I had no adults in tow, more could be made of the experience by marvelling through the mesh fence at the brown, swirling torrent thundering its way towards Southend. Wet shoes and socks were a small price to pay for the pleasure of interacting with this thrilling spectacle of nature.

I suspect that the 176 homeowners whose properties the brook flooded into in September 1968 after 150mm of rainfall were less enthusiastic. Unfortunately for me, this event prompted major channel improvements in the form of additional concrete lining, the Anglian Water 'Prittle Brook flood relief tunnel' at Belfairs, and secondary defences at Manchester Drive. My paddling days were over.

A friend recounts stories of his 1930s childhood which involved balancing along a wooden plank to cross the Prittle Brook at Manchester Drive: from civilisation on the south side to the undeveloped wilderness beyond. In wintertime, the channel was

impassable. You can imagine the condition for the horse and cart traffic before that time when Eastwood Road, then known as Turners Lane, was part of the main route from Southend to London.

Of course, our stories are nothing in the history of this little brook. Little? Just stand at one end of Eastwood Road, Flemming Avenue, Tankerville Drive or Kingswood Chase; look down, down to the Prittle Brook and then up, up the other side of the road and imagine the force of water that carved such a valley.

In fact, the Prittle Brook has played a significant role in Leigh for 4,000 years for it is here, where the brook runs between Flemming Avenue and Tankerville Drive, that the first evidence of human habitation in the Leigh Town Council area has been found: a Bronze Age 'hoard' containing lumps of unworked bronze, axes and other implements. Whether Mr Bronze Worker was just passing through or had settled in Leigh we will never know, but we do know that he was here, using the Prittle Brook for drinking, washing, cooking and in his bronze-working trade.

Later, the brook helped to delineate land holdings for Saxons in the Belfairs area. At the same time it acquired its Saxon name Prittlebrook: Babbling Brook, claiming its important status when Prittlewell village shared its name. There is no doubt that the brook determined the location of the settlement of the Saxon King and later the Cluniac Prittlewell Priory.

Fast forward to the 1940s when a footpath was laid to enable walkers easy access between Leigh and Southend. Renamed 'Prittle Brook Greenway' in 2007, the widened path follows the major part of the brook, although the full watercourse connects Thundersley to the River Roach at Purdeys Way, Rochford.

Despite the reduction in paddling opportunities, the Prittle Brook continues to deserve our respect as a significant historic feature of Leigh.





Interested in Sailing ?



If you are watching from the shore, colourful sails passing by may entice you to find out more about sailing as a sport or pastime.

At the Leigh-on-Sea Sailing Club we have members who enjoy all aspects of the sport

from pottering around the estuary, family fun sailing, racing competitively or simply enjoying the social scene. The world of sailing is so diverse that while the same skills and techniques are used, the way in which they are enjoyed varies a great deal. A popular misconception is that sailing is an elitist sport, this is not the case in Leigh.

At the Leigh-on-Sea Sailing Club we offer best rates on membership, with substantial discounts for sailors under 30. We also have a fleet of club boats that enable those with experience to get afloat at limited cost. RYA accredited training is available locally together with coaching from club members in an open and friendly environment, the aim of the club is to promote amateur sailing as an accessible sport and to encourage new members to take part.

For more information visit www.leighsailingclub.org or find us on Facebook

“Leigh-on-Sea Sailing Club” is a Community Amateur Sports Club

Southend Anglo Italian Circle



The Southend Anglo Italian Circle was established nearly 25 years ago with the aim of fostering relationships and understanding between British and Italian communities and to promote interest in Italian society, culture and language.

The Circle meets monthly on a Wednesday evening at Leigh

Community Centre and provides a regular and varied programme of illustrated lectures covering such diverse subjects as Italian regions, history, language, music, art and cuisine. It offers personal experiences of life in Italy and of Italians living in the UK. There are sociable quiz and conversation evenings for practising some Italian.

Lectures are given in Italian and every effort is made to accommodate and encourage all ranges of ability from beginners to fluent speakers of Italian.

Membership is just £30 p.a. (for ten meetings) or guests are welcome to pay on the door at £4.50 per meeting.

The Southend Anglo Italian Circle provides a friendly setting for anyone interested in furthering their interest in all aspects of the Italian way of life.

We look forward to welcoming you.....

For further information please visit our website:

www.italiancircle.co.uk or call Jan Lewis on 01702 478105

The best kept secret in seafood: The Cockle Sheds, Leigh-on-Sea

There is nothing like the British seaside and by far the most real seaside experience is Southend-on-Sea.

But for a real culinary treat on a visit to this east coast resort head to its neighbour, Leigh-on-Sea. There, running between the train station and the cobbled streets of the old town, is Cockle Row, dominated by quaint clapboard cockle sheds. These sheds have been passed down through generations of cockle sellers and offer the freshest and cheapest seafood for miles. The same cockles you can buy for pennies here are also supplied to Michelin-starred restaurants in Paris. If you find yourself struggling to choose between sellers, don't worry - they are all reliable and

worthy of mention - even Rick Stein buys cockles here.

Further along is the original hub of the town, which feels as though it hasn't changed since the days of the smugglers. Armed with a tray of glistening cockles, a pot of silky rollmops and a crusty bread roll, take our cue and “sit on the sea wall or one of the wharfs and look out over the mud flats on the Thames Estuary and breathe in the wonderful fresh iodine aromas to clear away any cobwebs”.

All this added to the a range of some of the best restaurants and pubs in Essex, from simple fish and chips served in paper to top quality dining experiences.

Exercise and Fun with the Traditional Touring Club



By Jenny Butler, Secretary TTC

If you're looking for a local club which combines exercise and fun, the Traditional Touring Club (TTC) could be the answer.

The TTC is a walking and cycling club based in Leigh-on-Sea. Founded in 1993 the club organises a walk or a cycle ride every Sunday, and there are occasional walks during the week. This is a sociable and painless way of keeping fit! Some of the cycles and walks are local, but many trips take members to other parts of Essex, and to London, Suffolk, Kent and Sussex. Several longer trips are arranged each year in the UK and abroad.

The Club, which has about 120 members, also arranges social events including meals, theatre trips and cinema trips. Some members also take part in a book club. The TTC website www.traditionaltouringclub.com gives more information about the Club, with details of future walks, cycle rides and social events, and includes photographs of some of our activities.

The TTC is a member of the Ramblers, the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) and the Cycle Touring Club (CTC), and is affiliated to HF Holidays.

Our monthly Club meeting takes place on the third Wednesday of each month at 8.30pm at The Constitutional Club in Elm Road. The annual subscription to the TTC is £18. New members are always welcome, and it's possible to take part in two walks or cycles as 'tasters' before joining as a full member.

If you'd like to know more about the Club give Sally Meredith a call on 01702 462225 or come along to one of our monthly meetings.



North Street Primary School

Fundraising for fun! Learning to care

So far during the school year that began in September 2015, we are proud to report that the children of Leigh North Street Primary School have raised over £4,500! The aim is to raise funds for local, national and global causes so that we understand more about the world we all live in.

We started in September by learning about the Global Goals, which took over from the Millennium Goals set in 2000. These cover issues such as: looking after our environment, tackling poverty, ensuring health and well-being, gender equality, access to high quality education, availability of food and clean water. Mrs Scarnell (our Charities and Global Interests Co-ordinator) presented an assembly about the Goals and put posters up around the school and we are having assemblies about each of the goals during the year.

Harvest Festival

Our local charity caring for homeless people is HARP Southend; we collected food donations during Harvest festival and had an assembly where a member of the HARP team spoke to us about their work.

Spots and stripes!

Next, it was time to plan for BBC Children in Need in mid-November. The whole school was invited to come dressed in spots and stripes for the day and to make a contribution to the fund – we raised a whopping £930!

In the lead up to Christmas all the children got involved in singing Christmas carols and putting on productions. We celebrated Christmas on the final day of term by wearing our Christmas jumpers. During this two week extravaganza the children collected almost £2,600 from parents, carers, family members and commuters at Leigh station – thank you all for your generosity. In addition, we collected and sent a full car-load of toys (donated by children, their families and staff) to Southend Council so that vulnerable children around the Borough would also have Christmas presents.

Just in case you are interested our sub-total from Term 1 was just over £3,500! Wow!

Bookworms sharing our passion

As part of World Book Day in early March 2016 children saw a film in assembly about a charity called Book Aid International. This charity sends books to schools in Africa where, without them, the children would be sharing one book between ten of them. On Friday 4th March all Leigh North Street Primary School children came to school dressed as a book character – in Year 6 they came as characters from Shakespeare because they had been studying his plays. Another £400 was raised!



Mrs Lucas and representatives from every year group with the presents donated by children, parents and staff

Sport Relief Superstars

No sooner had we finished World Book Week celebrations than Sport Relief was on the horizon - what could we do to raise the maximum possible amount?

Children were invited to bring in a donation for wearing their favourite sports gear for the day; the donations totalled £602. Lower School children had an obstacle course set up in the Active Zone and thoroughly enjoyed competing to be the fastest and fittest. Upper School break-time was busy too; one of our Year 1 mum's is a Zumba instructor so she ran a session for children and staff that left us with pounding hearts! Meanwhile, Sports Council reps had set up an assault course on the astroturf – these two activities netted more than £50 donated by children from their pocket money. A small group of Year 5 children remained silent for the whole of Friday lunchtime and raised £36. As part of their PE curriculum Year 6 had been doing a 'bleep test'. This involves running a set distance in a specified time and beating a bleep; you continue doing this in ever-shorter times always trying to beat the bleep. The children had the idea of getting sponsorship from family and friends to help motivate them whilst at the same time collecting money for a great cause. The money is still rolling in but so far the total raised through sponsorship is £230. That's a total of £882 sent to Sport Relief.

We asked our Head teacher, Mrs Lucas, who is retiring at the end of this term, how she feels about the fund-raising that the children have done during the last eighteen and a half years and, particularly, during her last two terms. This is what she told us:

I have always been extremely impressed by the generosity of the children and parents of Leigh North Street Primary School. We have raised so much money for so many worthwhile causes over the years.

Following my retirement, I am confident that the charity work and awareness of others will continue and, indeed, go from strength to strength.

Reporters: Ethan, Evan, Iris, Jacob, Sofia and Thomas - Year 6 students

Westleigh School



Recorder Masterclass

The Year 3 and 4 children were very lucky to be given the opportunity to watch a recital from international recorder superstar Piers Adams. He had the children in the palm of his hand as he talked through his musical background and showed them a selection of his recorders, some which dated back many years. The children were amazed at Piers' brilliant solo performance, which at one point included him playing three recorders at once. The West Leigh Junior recorder players from years 3 through to 6 were then invited, along with children from Bournes Green Junior School, King Edmund School, Westcliff High School for Girls and Southend High School for Boys, to take part in an interactive workshop with Piers to showcase their talents and to take advice and expertise from the international maestro himself. They had been working hard to learn a special ragtime piece in six parts. This was an amazing experience for our children and the atmosphere during the session was buzzing. We hope the workshop will inspire them to reach even greater musical achievements in the future.



Inter school quiz

West Leigh Junior School took part in the National Inter-school quiz in January. All the children who showed an interest in taking part were put through their paces at school before the staff selected two teams of four to go through to compete in the area heats at Heycroft Primary School. Each team had one child from each year group. They competed against other schools from the area answering a number of general knowledge questions. Both teams worked well together to support each other as they went through the rounds. One of the teams came 7th overall and the other team came 1st with almost 400 points more than the team in second place. They will now go through to the semi final after Easter.



Road safety workshop

Following the response from our parent council we booked a road safety assembly with Southend Council and a road safety roadshow 'Don't get Splatted' run by drama group 'Act on Info'. The two events were delivered to the whole school. The Southend Council session was run by Helen Waller, who runs our Bikeability. She talked about road safety with a particular focus on pedestrian safety, speaking about wearing reflective clothing and the importance of the 'Stop, Look and Listen' rule. During the roadshow the following week, children watched some drama sketches before taking part in a number of fun and interactive games to learn the important road safety messages. Hopefully both the events have raised awareness to all our pupils.





David Hall Clogher Bay Rocks

Leigh Camera Club

Photography continues to be a popular hobby for many people and with digital technology fully matured now, the possibilities for self expression are endless. Most people start with an interest in buying a nice camera and then soon start wondering about what pictures to take. Long before Leigh established itself as a centre of interest for artists, Leigh Camera Club was a meeting point for amateur and professional photographers since 1920.

The Club members are a mixed bunch, the turnover of new members is around 15-20% per year of people that join the Club to learn various aspects of photography. The Club is also an important outlet for their work as having created images people often look for a forum to show the images and see the work of other people. Here the Club comes into its own as each Thursday at 8pm at the Community Centre we either hold

competitions where we invite comments and feedback of our work, or see a presentation from a visiting expert photographer.

Michelle Mackie is a fairly new member of the Club and her work has a unique style and distinctive style. She has explored different ways to exhibit her work and some of her images have recently been published in the online edition of Vogue !

Michelle Mackie (in her own words)

"When I was a child I remember spending hours and hours sitting with my Granddad looking at old photos. It wasn't just the vintage style and black and white tones I loved but the stories that went with them. My Granddad passed away 4 years ago and before he died he gave me some money and strict instructions that it was to be spent on something I wanted for myself.

Although it wasn't much it enabled me to get my first camera and set me on a journey trying to use it. I didn't have a clue! I am 40yrs old so am quite a late starter but I guess you could say I have found my passion and am loving every learning process. It's been like therapy and I now have something I can do with all those stories in my head.

I can visit light and dark places in my mind without being scared and embrace them, I can enjoy my wild and wacky imagination and let others see just a little part of me. I get to capture precious moments and know they will never be forgotten because they all tell a story".

You can see more of Michelle's work at www.dollypix.co.uk

David Hall is another member who has had a successful year. This year David achieved his Associate qualification LRPS from the Royal Photographic Society (RPS). That's no mean feat and represents years of work from David, who is always keen to share his knowledge with others at the Club. The panel of prints he presented for his award can be viewed on his website along with his other images at www.davidhallsphotography.weebly.com

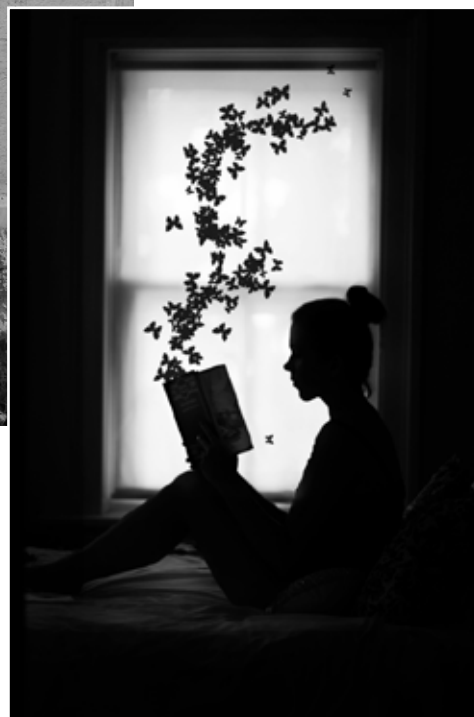
The Club is always looking for different ways of sharing our work. This year we teamed up with a Dutch camera Club and swapped dozens of images. At Leigh we had an evening where we enjoyed the Dutch work and vice-versa. We may have to do a field trip soon!



David Hall Trees at Budleigh Salterton



Michelle Mackie Sign of the Times



Michelle Mackie The stuff books are made of

We have historically held an Annual Exhibition of our prints, however, with the commercial costs of renting space increasing and with Southend Library changing we are finding it hard to find a suitable location. Hence for the first time this year we will set up an online exhibition on Flickr. We hope that this will allow the Club to establish some contacts with other local photographers. We already have a Facebook page and this is very popular. We have a website which gives details of our programme, competitions and members albums where our images can be viewed, please visit at www.leighcameraclub.co.uk

Anyone interested in joining is most welcome, the Club runs during term time from September to May and meets at the Leigh Community Centre on Thursdays at 8pm.

RECYCLE MORE THIS SUMMER

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR NEW BLUE BOX

I think we'd all agree we live in a really beautiful town steeped in history and much loved by visitors. So it is sad to see that a few people treat some of the most attractive areas as a place to dump rubbish or throw their drinking cans and takeaway containers.

Much of this detritus could easily be recycled by depositing it into FREE pink sacks and placed outside our homes for weekly collection. Even sorting our rubbish seems too much for some people who buy black

sacks and dump all their household waste into them, because clearly sorting card, paper and plastic is just too much trouble. So, there are two issues here, the knowledge that someone else will come along and pick up after us or that 'landfill' is a bit like 'climate change' and merely a myth. It's just lazy thinking. Now I know that berating people for these actions will not change the habits of a lifetime, so this is a plea to encourage good practise and put our environment first.



tins & jars



plastic



glass



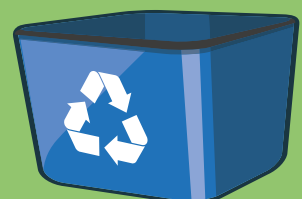
pink sack



paper



card



new blue box