

NATIONAL & WORLD BRIEFING

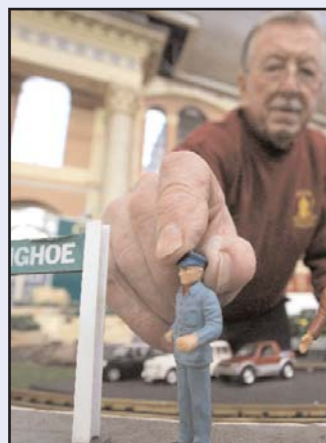
Drink cops nab 200 a day

MORE than 200 drunk and drugged drivers were caught every day by police during a December crime blitz.

Forces, including Essex, targeted motorists who flouted driving laws. They tested 223,423 people and found 7,638 were over the limit, failed a field impairment drugs check or refused to be tested.

As a result, an average of 239 motorists were arrested every day for breaking the law during the 32-day operation.

Police figures revealed the number of people failing breath tests and drug impairment checks fell overall.



A MODELLING enthusiast puts the finishing touches to a railway station at the London Model Engineering Exhibition. The exhibition, at Alexandra Palace, North London, opened today and is on all weekend.

Gold rip-off

THE trading watchdog has demanded information from companies which offer consumers cash for gold jewellery to ensure they are not breaking the law.

The call follows complaints from consumers and allegations by Which? Money who said the gold buying companies offered "shockingly bad value" and urged people not to use them.

Essex crime down

CRIME has dropped by 8 per cent across the country, the Home Office said yesterday. In Essex the figure for recorded crime in the third quarter of 2009, was down by 6 per cent.

Thames eels riddle

EEL populations in the River Thames have crashed by 98 per cent in just five years, scientists say. While 1,500 were captured in traps in 2005, just 50 were recorded last year.

A DRIVER who parked in front of a speed camera in Nottingham was sent two tickets after it was triggered by passing cars.

WAY FORWARD

WHAT THE PUBLIC SAY

Shamie-Lee Parsons, 16, of Mountfields, Pitsea, a Seevic College student, said:



"Vange and Pitsea have got a bad name for drugs and violence, and that is bound to affect people's life expectancy. "People are taking drugs younger and younger. I know people who are 14, and are already taking cocaine.

"That's going to affect people's organs and make them healthier in later life. It needs to be sorted out, but there isn't a lot the council or health services can do. "It's down to parents to realise what is happening to their children and make them stop."

Toni Ambrose, 42, who manages Martins



newsagents, in Riverview, Vange, said: "A lot of elderly people come into our shop, and I don't think they get as many home visits as they should from social services.

"They don't seem to get much help from their families either. We've had elderly people who fell over outside our shop and we had to take them home ourselves. "I also think too many youngsters are having children and they don't know enough about nutrition. "It's too easy to buy a cereal bar or packet of crisps, when they should be making their children healthy meals."

Karen Tibble, 46, of Felmores, Pitsea, said:



"I think everywhere in Basildon is the same when it comes to how healthy people are - whether you live in Pitsea, Vange or anywhere else. "It just depends on how you look after yourself. You have to make sure you do enough exercise and eat properly. "I suffer from asthma, but I've only had one attack in the past ten years, and that's because I'm careful."

Ayla Wickert, 17, of Crest Avenue, Pitsea, a Seevic College student, said:



"One of the main problems is there aren't any decent sports and community centres. "There should be somewhere you can do things like exercise classes for free. "At the moment you have to pay, and it's too expensive for a lot of people. "My doctor's surgery, in Vange, at Southview Park, is very good. If you need an appointment they see you really quickly and when I had a bad knee they even paid for me to have private treatment. "But I think Basildon Hospital is terrible."

Jake Teeboon, 16, of Mountfields, Pitsea, a Seevic College student, said:



"There are lots of fast food places around here, and I think people are lazy, so they get their meals from them every day rather than cooking. "In Pitsea, there's a McDonald's, KFC, chip shop, two Indian and two Chinese restaurants. If you don't eat properly, then it is bound to have a bad effect on your health. "It is also easy for young people to get hold of alcohol and cigarettes."

Nicky Price, 37, of Riverview, Vange, said:



"I know the health service is paying for people to go on healthy eating or exercise classes at the moment. "I've been on a course myself and have lost two-and-a-half stone. "The only problem is they give you vouchers to go along for 24 weeks, but you have to pay for it yourself after that. "My vouchers ran out before Christmas and I'm struggling to afford it now. A lot of people around here will struggle to pay for their courses too. I would say it would be a good idea to make the classes free."

Trust chief's healthy vision for town

THE trust paying for the study said it will deliver improvements to people's health.

Residents of Vange and parts of Pitsea will be helped by the review, according to health trust NHS South West Essex.

The trust is paying around £200,000 for the research in Vange and parts of Pitsea, while Essex County Council is paying around £50,000.

Tom Abell, the trust's acting director of

commissioning and service integration, said the study would teach staff about patients' experiences and learn how to improve.

He said: "Our vision is the entire population served by NHS South West Essex is among the healthiest and best cared for in the country."

"But we face some real challenges in achieving this vision, with a gap in life expectancy between the least and most deprived communities. We want to learn from these communi-

ties about their personal experiences of using the health service, in terms of access and quality of care.

"We can then make tangible improvements and commission services that help deliver our vision."

He added the reason for gaps in life expectancies were partly down to people's lifestyles, attitudes to health, and access to services.

WEATHER

echo-news.co.uk/weather

TODAY A wet day with the fresh southerly wind easing to become westerly. TEMP: 4 to 6c AIR QUALITY: Good	SUN TEMP: 0 to 5c	MON TEMP: -2 to 3c	TUE TEMP: -2 to 3c
TOMORROW A dry and much brighter day, with a light north-westerly breeze. TEMP: 6 to 11c AIR QUALITY: Good	HIGH TIDES: Today 4.41pm - 5.1m, Tomorrow 4.41am - 5.1m, 5.24pm - 4.9m, Sunday 5.30am - 4.9m, 6.20pm - 4.8m, Monday 6.36am - 4.8m. SUNSET/SUNRISE: 4.29pm, Tomorrow 7.47am - 4.31pm, Sunday 7.45am - 4.32pm, Monday 7.44am.		

ON THIS DAY

1561: Elizabethan writer and statesman Francis Bacon was born in London.
1788: English poet Lord Byron was born George Gordon in London.
1901: Queen Victoria died at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, aged 81.
1905: Five hundred died as protesters against Russian Czar Nicholas II marched on the Winter Palace in St Petersburg.
1927: The Football League match between Arsenal and Sheffield United was the first to be broadcast.
1944: Allied troops landed at Anzio, Italy.
1947: The fresh meat ration was reduced to a shilling, or 5p today, a week.

USA	1.55 dollars
Euro	1.1 euros
Australia	1.7 dollars
Canada	1.62 dollars
China	9.90 yuan
Denmark	8.16 kroner
India	65.8 rupees
S Africa	11.49 rand
Japan	141.46 yen
N Zealand	2.1 dollars
Sweden	11.18 krona
Turkey	2.31 new lira

FOR A LONGER LIFE



Join us - researcher Ricky McCarthy hopes more people will sign up to compile the health dossiers
Picture: MAXINE CLARKE ZVNSD-05

Call for more people to carry out research

MORE people are needed from Vange and Pitsea to help carry out the vital research.

Turning Point is offering training for residents and £7 an hour to compile information about health, social care and housing services it will use to make the recommendations for Pitsea and Vange.

Ten residents, including Ricky McCarthy, of Thorolds, Vange, have signed up so far to compile dossiers. Questions include asking resi-

dents whether they are happy with their area, what could be done to improve it, and how they feel about their treatment by social and health staff.

An event at Pitsea Market between 10am and noon on Friday, January 29, will give people the chance to give their views.

To become a researcher, call Dr Khandelwal on 07854 238345, or e-mail Ajay.Khandelwal@turning-point.co.uk

Residents of leafy Bury live up to 17 years more

PEOPLE in the most deprived areas of Pitsea and Vange can expect to die 17 years younger than in leafy Bury St Edmunds.

The average life expectancy for men and women in the most deprived parts of Pitsea and Vange is 76.

Yet in the affluent Moreton Hall area of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, people can expect to live to 93, the highest rate in the country.

The deprived Middlehaven dis-

trict in Middlesbrough is the lowest in the country at 68.

In Billericay, just four miles up the road from Pitsea, the figure is 82. In Southend, men can expect to live until they are 79.

In Epping, in West Essex, life expectancy is also 79, compared to 81 in Colchester.

In affluent Kensington and Chelsea, London, people can expect to live to 85.

Life expectancy is 78 in Scotland and 79 in Wales.

People in Pitsea and Vange die earlier than those in Billericay

AN IN-DEPTH health probe will try to stop people dying young in the most deprived parts of Basildon.

Essex County Council and NHS South West Essex have teamed up and hired health group, Turning Point, to carry out an intense investigation into problems in Pitsea and Vange.

The areas were flagged up after figures showed people there die up to seven years younger than in other parts of the district.

The Echo quizzed people in Pitsea and Vange on health problems, and they said easy access to drugs, lack of low-cost sports facilities and a culture of fast food was to blame.

Turning Point, an independent health company, has carried out similar projects in Suffolk, Bolton, and Hartlepool, and has been paid £250,000 to carry out the research.

Residents living within Pitsea and Vange are being hired to go into the community and talk with hundreds of residents over a three-month period.

The information received will form the basis of the recommendations, and the review will also look at how to develop better housing and social care for locals.

By ADAM GAUDRY
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Currently, a new drop-in health centre, where people can talk to health, social care and housing staff, is among the ideas being mooted.

Dr Ajay Khandelwal, senior research adviser for Turning Point, said: "We want to get the whole picture of the area and the services people use. "Then we will think about how we make sense of all of that, and find a new way of making things better for people. We are a platform to help local residents design what they want."

Figures, published by the NHS in 2009, showed how men in Vange and Pitsea were expected to live to around 73, compared to men in Billericay, whose average life expectancy was 81.

Women in Vange and Pitsea are expected to live until around 79 compared with 84 in parts of Billericay and Wickford.

Politicians welcomed the study, but said it was important the review did not just become a talking shop.

Basildon MP Angela Smith said: "The key thing is local people have the chance to have their say and Turning Point has a very good reputation in this kind of work.

"But the crucial thing will be that the authorities act on the information they receive."

Ron Livesey, a Pitsea North West member of Basildon Council, said: "Provided it's not a lot of hot air and it will actually put in place measures, I think it's a good thing."

Turning Point, which began preliminary paperwork on the scheme in April, is hoping to present the report to the county council and health trust in May.

NEW CAMPUS BASILDON

Open Evening

Wednesday 27 January 2010 6-8pm

A new learning experience for 16-19 year olds

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F 01268 565 515
www.newcampusbasildon.ac.uk