

MUSIC MAN PROJECT TO HOST FREE CHRISTMAS CONCERTS



■ On song – Music Man Project's Christmas concert.

Image: Music Man Project

SOUTHEND'S award-winning disability art charity is set to host free traditional Christmas concerts.

Featuring new music alongside festive favourites, The Music Man Project is hosting free

concert at the Plaza Centre in Southend on Thursday, December 4 and Highlands Methodist Church in Leigh on Friday, December 5.

A spokesman for The Music Man Project Essex said: "These concerts fill up fast so grab yours

before they're gone.

"Ensure to click the correct concert day when ordering, and confirmations sometimes go to junk mail - so please check."

Concert tickets can be booked at

musicmanproject.eventcube.io.

The Music Man Project was founded in Southend by David Stanley BEM and provides accessible music education and performance opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Progress at school rated 'inadequate'

A SCHOOL in Westcliff has made "significant strides" since being rated inadequate, Ofsted has said after a monitoring visit.

Chase High School, in Westcliff, was placed in special measures following a damning inspection earlier this year.

The inadequate report found pupils "do not feel safe" and "suffer in silence".

However, following a second monitoring visit, inspectors have said that leaders have continued to take action to improve the school, and have created a "positive" and "safe" environment.

The report stated: "Pupils largely aspire to succeed. They feel safe.

"This is because the school is a more positive environment, and pupils have trusted adults to turn to for support.

"The school provides pupils with support to ensure that they are safe. Systems to check that pupils are safe are robust."

A redesign of the curriculum is also under way, with some subjects already showing clearer sequencing and higher expectations.

The school has also made progress in tackling issues such as misogyny and bullying, with instances now described as "rare" and dealt with swiftly.

Behaviour has improved, with orderly routines such as morning line-ups helping pupils settle quickly.

Despite the improvements, inspectors note that more work is still needed before Chase High School can leave special measures.

Row as £1,500 petition denied council debate

By **OLIVER PARTRIDGE**
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RESIDENTS stumped up £1,500 of their own cash to promote a petition calling for Billericay and Wickford to separate from Basildon as part of the major shake-up to local government.

Under the Government's devolution plans, all councils in Essex are set to be scrapped and replaced with new unitary authorities across the county.

Basildon Council is in favour of a five-unitary authority approach, which would see it combine with Thurrock Council.

But Tory councillors north of the A127 are calling for Billericay and Wickford to be included in a "mid-Essex authority" with the likes of Chelmsford and Brentwood.

A petition launched by Andy Barnes, Tory councillor for Bill-

ericay East, was backed by residents, who crowdfunded £1,500 to promote and advertise the cause, which attracted 6,000 signatures.

The issue will be discussed at a scrutiny committee but was denied a debate at a full council meeting after nearly half of the signatures were invalidated for originating from out of the area.

George Jeffery, Conservative councillor for Wickford Park, said: "I don't feel this issue is being given the attention and time it deserves and it should be debated at full council.

"Residents contributed £1,500 to support this cause and there are a significant amount of motivated residents.

"All the money gets spent in Basildon and residents in Wickford and Billericay are paying council tax and seeing nothing in return.

"This is a once-in-50-year

chance with the reorganising of government and residents deserve to have their say, using this chance to leave and escape the liability of Thurrock's debt."

Mr Jeffery added: "There may well be discrepancies on that number, as some signatures were routed from elsewhere, with valid signatures being unfairly struck off.

"I find it incredible for them to knock off signatures [and] besides there are people not living here but that grew up here that have an interest and deserve to contribute."

A Basildon Council spokesperson said: "Once checked, the petition submitted by Councillor Barnes provided 3,271 signatures from those that live, work or study in the borough.

"Therefore, the petition meets the following criteria within the petitions scheme to be reviewed at scrutiny committee by passing the threshold of 1,000 signatures."



Don't miss your opportunity to join Waverley as she returns to London and the Thames Estuary from Wednesday 24th September until Sunday 12th October.

CRUISE FROM SOUTHEAST PIER

CLACTON STEAM ROUND PRINCIPALITY OF SEALAND

WEDNESDAY September 24 - Leave 12noon, back 7:15pm
Join Waverley for a one-way cruise to Clacton-on-Sea £45, cruise to the seaside resort of Clacton-on-Sea for time ashore £51, Seniors £49, or stay aboard Waverley for a special sailing along the Essex Coast and round the Principality of Sealand. Live entertainment will be provided by musical duo Eclipse performing hits from the 60s - meet Pirate Radio DJs and hear the special commentary on the history of Sealand £56. Return by coach from Clacton.

SENIOR BRING A FRIEND HALF FARE

Buy one Senior (60 & over) ticket & get a second Senior HALF FARE. Advance booking only.

THAMES FORTS - RED SANDS & SHIVERING SANDS

79TH ANNIVERSARY OF WAVERLEY'S LAUNCH THURSDAY October 2 - Leave 1:20pm, back 4pm

Join Waverley for an afternoon cruise of the Thames Estuary to the Maunsell Forts of Red Sands and Shivering Sands Stay. Enjoy a good old fashioned Cockney knees up sing-a-long with Tom Carradine in the Jeanie Deans Lounge £46.

SENIOR BRING A FRIEND HALF FARE

Buy one Senior (60 & over) ticket & get a second Senior HALF FARE. Advance booking only.

RIVER MEDWAY & VIEW MEDWAY QUEEN

SUNDAY October 5 - Leave 1:30pm, back 5pm

Cruise the River Medway to Rochester and view the Dunkirk Heroine Paddle Steamer Medway Queen £46. **KIDS GO FOR £1.**

CRUISE RIVER THAMES & THROUGH TOWER BRIDGE TWICE!

Steam up the River Thames passing through the Flood Barrier, sail round the Isle of Dogs, view the O2 Arena, Canary Wharf & Greenwich, sense the excitement build as Waverley approaches Tower Bridge which opens just for you! We encourage everyone on board to cheer as Waverley's steam whistle announces her arrival in London. Enjoy views of London before witnessing Tower Bridge lift for a second time. £59, Senior £55 (October 8 only).

FRIDAY October 3 - Leave 12:30pm, back 8pm by coach from Gravesend
MONDAY October 6 - Leave 1:30pm, back 9:15pm by coach from Gravesend
WEDNESDAY October 8 - Leave 11am, back 6:15pm

CRUISE TWINKLING THAMES & FLOODLIT TOWER BRIDGE

Join Waverley for an evening cruise up the River Thames to London. View the ever changing River Thames - the Flood Barrier, O2 Arena and Canary Wharf before steaming under the floodlit Tower Bridge and into the Pool of London. One way to London £49, with coach return to Southend £57.

SATURDAY September 27 - Leave 6pm, arrive London 9:45pm, back 11:15pm

WEDNESDAY October 1 - Leave 4:30pm, arrive London 8pm, back 9:45pm

SATURDAY October 4 - Leave 5:15pm, arrive London 8:50pm, back 10:30pm

SUNDAY October 5 - Leave 5:15pm, arrive London 9pm, back 10:45pm

FRIDAY October 10 - Leave 4pm, arrive London 8pm, back 9:45pm

SATURDAY October 11 - Leave 5:45pm, arrive London 9:30pm

SUNDAY October 12 - Leave 5:05pm, arrive London 8:50pm, back 10:30pm

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