

Discover the treasures of Bexley



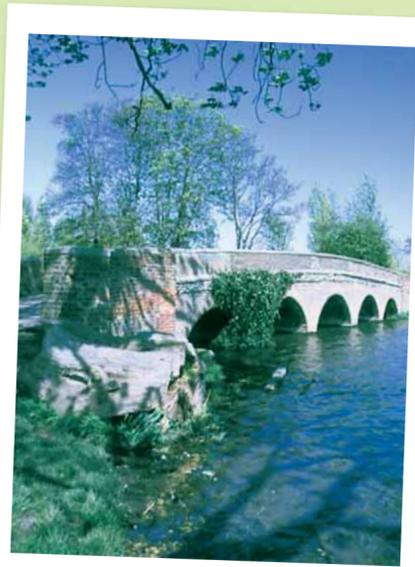
Listening to you, working for you www.bexley.gov.uk

Discover the treasures of Bexley

For residents and visitors the London Borough of Bexley offers a wealth of recreation and leisure facilities and attractions. Recent years have seen many new and exciting developments around the borough; three new leisure centres at Erith, Bexleyheath and Sidcup, the opening of Danson House and the restoration of Hall Place to name but a few. Bexley has something for everyone from the industrial heritage of Crossness Pumping Station to the tranquil pleasures of Foots Cray Meadows. This leaflet will help provide you with information if you are a visitor looking for places of interest, a local resident looking to find out more about your area, or if you have just moved to the borough and want to find out more about what is available locally.

For travellers along the A2 and A20 from the Channel Tunnel and ports, Bexley is the gateway to London. Whether you are looking for a day out of the capital or a base to travel into it, Bexley is ideally situated, with 10 stations on three different railway lines, all providing trains into London.

Bexley is just 15 miles from the City of London offering easy access to the capital while also benefitting from open countryside. It includes extensive areas of countryside ranging from ancient woodland to marshland and more than 80 parks and gardens which are open to the public. For visitors who choose to savour the simple pleasures of a walk in the country there are several waymarked footpaths to follow, including part of the Thames Path, South East London Green Chain Walk, Cray Riverway / London Loop and the Shuttle Riverway.

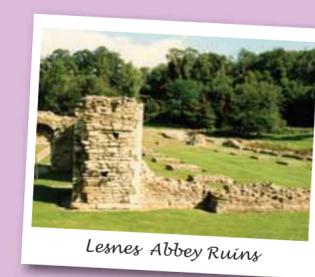


Five Arch Bridge, Fooks Cray Meadows

These take in open parkland, woodland and grazing marshes where the diverse habitats offer a lot of wildlife interest. For the more energetic, outdoor pursuits include orienteering, cycling, sailing, rowing, angling, golf and tennis.



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|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bexley Borough | Parks and public open spaces | Historic building |
| Motorway (M25) | Other green space | Historic church |
| Trunk roads | Information centre | Leisure/sports centre |
| Main roads in Bexley | Star rated hotels | Golf course/pitch and putt |
| Railway lines and stations | Caravan and camping site | Signposted walks |
| Town centre | Hospital | Theatre/Cinema |



Lesnes Abbey Ruins

Lesnes Abbey

3 Lesnes Abbey, Abbey Road, Belvedere
Lesnes Abbey is a hidden treasure in the heart of suburban London. The site contains the consolidated remains of Lesnes Abbey ruin founded by Richard de Luci in 1178. Most of the Abbey buildings were pulled down soon after the dissolution of monastic buildings during the reign of King Henry VIII. The Abbey site was opened to the public in 1931 and since 1986 the site has belonged to the London Borough of Bexley. As well as being a very important site throughout history, the adjacent Lesnes Abbey Wood combines formal gardens with woodlands, famous for their naturalised wild daffodil and bluebell displays. There are self-guided trails which take you through valleys containing hornbeam trees, wildflowers such as figwort and dog's mercury, open heath land and ornamental gardens. An area in the woods, made up of Blackheath Beds containing fossils has been segregated from the public. The main fossils found today are shark's teeth and seashells. Individuals and family groups are free to dig or sieve through the sands at the fossil bed, but larger groups should book (free of charge) with the Council's Parks Department prior to their visit. Call 0208 303 7777 or email park&openspaces@bexley.gov.uk

Open: Open all year
Nearest rail connection Abbey Wood Station (10 min walk)
Bus connections 99, 229, 469 and B11



Lesnes Abbey Woods

Getting around Bexley

Journey Planner:

For detailed travel information from your home to any destination visit www.tfl.gov.uk or use the following contacts for rail and bus information.

By Rail:

Regular train services from Charing Cross, Cannon Street, London Bridge, Waterloo East and Victoria connect with the 12 borough stations. South Eastern Trains customer services number, 0870 603 0405 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk for full details of routes and train times.

By Bus:

Numerous bus routes operate within Bexley and link to other areas of the South East. For information about bus times and routes, please call London Travel Information on 020 7222 1234. For travel advice about accessible transport in London please call 020 7941 4600.

Car Parks:

Parking is available at all Town centres and at most major attractions (not Red House or Lesnes Abbey).

Cycle Routes:

There are cycle routes in all the main town centres, whilst leisure cycle routes include the Thames Path. For further information relating to cycling and routes visit www.tfl.gov.uk and go to the cycling page.

Information given was correct at time of going to press.

Where to go, what to see

Please note: where possible, it is advisable to telephone before you make a visit to check opening times and admission charges.

Hall Place and gardens

1 Hall Place and Gardens, Bourne Road, Bexley DA5 1PQ, Tel: 01322 526574 www.hallplace.org.uk

Hall Place is a Grade I listed Tudor Mansion built almost 500 years ago in the reign of Henry VIII for Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Champneys, with a red brick Stuart addition a century later. It boasts a magnificent panelled Tudor great hall and minstrels gallery. The house has recently been restored and almost all the rooms can now be visited. In new exhibition galleries is a wealth of fascinating objects from the Bexley museum collection within the historic interiors, including permanent and changing displays. From the house there are fine views over award-winning gardens, with topiary, a herb garden, a secret garden, Italianate garden and herbaceous borders.

In the former walled gardens are a plant nursery, model and display gardens, and sub-tropical plant houses, as well as a well stocked nursery shop. The new visitor centre houses a tourist information centre, a gift shop with a wide range of souvenirs, gifts and publications, a riverside tea room and toilets.

Three spaces for contemporary art exhibitions allow changing shows (often with works for sale) in a variety of media. There are numerous exhibitions and events - further details are available in the Bexley Heritage Trust's leaflet or on the website. Hall Place is a popular venue for weddings and corporate events.

Admission to the house and gardens is free. Refreshments are available from the riverside tea room or Mitchell and Butler operate a 'Miller and Carter' restaurant in the historic Jacobean Barn.



Model Gardens, Hall Place

Opening times:
Historic House:
1 April to 31 October -
Mon - Sat
10am - 4.45pm
Sun and BH's: 11am - 4.45pm
1 November to 31 March
Mon - Sat: 10am - 4pm
Sun: 11am - 4pm
Last admission 30 minutes
before closing time
Gardens:
Open daily 9am - dusk

Visitor Centre: 1 April to 31
October Mon - Sat: 10am - 5pm
Sun and BH's: 11am - 5pm
1 November to 31 March
Mon - Sat: 10am - 4.15pm
Sun: 11am - 4.15pm
Nearest rail connection Bexley
Station (taxi rank at station).
Bus connections 229, 492, B12,
& 132 to the foot of Gravel Hill
(5 min walk to Hall Place)

Danson House and Park

2 Danson House and Park, Danson Road, Bexleyheath DA6 8HL
Danson House Tel: 020 8303 6699
www.bexleyheritagetrust.org.uk/dansonhouse

Danson House, a Grade I listed house, sits in its own formal grounds within its estate, now run as a public park by the London Borough of Bexley. The house is a fine Palladian villa, praised by Pevsner as 'crystalline' in its architecture, that was completed in 1766 to the designs of the architect Sir Robert Taylor. The house was built as a suite of rooms for entertaining by a man besotted with his new wife and as a result the layout and interior decoration of the house reflect themes of love and enjoyment. The house was the most significant building at risk in London in 1995 but has since been



Danson House and Park

magnificently restored by English Heritage. The house is managed by Bexley Heritage Trust and is open to the public in the summer months, or at any time of year for groups by appointment. Events are held throughout the year. Details are on the Bexley Heritage Trust website. Visitors can enjoy light lunches on the terrace level, or home made cakes in the breakfast room.

House open: 1 April to 31 October - Wed, Thur, Sun and Bank Holiday
Mondays 11am - 5pm
1 June - 30 September also open on Tue 11am - 5pm
Last admission 45 minutes before closing time.
Pre-booked group tours can be accommodated on any day.
For group bookings: Tel: 020 8298 6951
There is an admission charge (children free) which offers a year's admission to the house.

Danson Park - The park was landscaped in the style of Capability Brown and features an ornamental lake and formal and informal gardens. The park is very popular whether for just enjoying the scenery or for the varied range of facilities, including rowing, sailing, angling, tennis, bowling, pitch and putt and a playground / splash park for children. The park has a full programme of annual events. Details of these are available on the Council's website at www.bexley.gov.uk

The historic stable block situated within the park has been converted into a popular family restaurant 'Danson Stables'.

Park open: Open all year Mon - Fri from 7:30am and Sat, Sun and Bank Holidays from 9am
During Spring and Summer the park is closed at sunset and times are displayed at each gate. During the winter (Nov to Jan) the park closes at 4:30pm. The main drive from Danson Road remains open to access the Danson Stables restaurant.
Nearest rail connection Bexleyheath Station or Welling Station.
Bus connections B13, 89, 96, or B14.

Footscray Meadows

Footscray Meadows - situated in the south of the Borough to the west of North Cray Road (A223)

As well as being the largest, Footscray Meadows is also the least formal of Bexley's open spaces. It is an important site for nature conservation and the London Borough of Bexley has declared large areas as a Local Nature Reserve. Fooks Cray Meadows are the remains of two mid-18th Century estates, namely Fooks Cray Place and North Cray Place. The remaining legacy of North Cray Place can be seen in the stunning Five Arch Bridge and the magnificent landscaping designed by 'Capability' Brown, who was commissioned to carry out the work in 1781. Remains of the formal gardens laid out at Fooks Cray Place by the renowned landscape architect Thomas Mawson can still be seen today.

Open: Open all year
Nearest rail connections Albany Park Station or Bexley Station.
Bus connections 492 North Cray Road, 51, 233, 321, 492, R11 Sidcup Hill, B14 Bexley Lane.





Crossness Pumping Station

Crossness Pumping Station

4 Crossness Pumping Station – Belvedere Road, Abbey Wood, SE2 9AQ www.crossness.org.uk

This building is a triumph of Victorian engineering and contains some magnificent cast iron decoration. Opened by the Prince of Wales in 1865, the pumping station was built to lift London's sewage into a large reservoir before being discharged into the Thames on the ebbing tide. The station contains four of the largest rotative beam engines in the world, together with a museum which explains the importance of Sir Joseph Bazalgette's innovative sewerage system for London. Both the building and the spectacular cast iron work are being restored to their former glory by the Crossness Engines Trust. One engine has now been restored and is steamed on special open days several times a year.

Open: Open to the public by appointment on advertised guided tour days. No booking is required for the scheduled open days. Guided tour visits must be booked in advance (with at least seven days notice) either on a Tuesday or Sunday between 9.30am and 4pm on 020 8311 3711. (no booking accepted by answer-phone). Visits commence at 1.30pm.

Museums and Local Studies

Bexley Heritage Trust was founded in 2000 to preserve and develop key heritage sites in the London Borough of Bexley. As well as managing Hall Place and Danson House they are also responsible for the care and management of Bexley's extensive museum collection. Part of the collection relating to Erith and the River Thames is on display at Erith, within the new Erith Library. At Hall Place there are regular exhibitions based around the collection, including furniture, costume, archaeology and social history.

Local Studies and Archives Centre at Central Library provides facilities for research and arranges talks and guided walks relating to the history of the borough.

Red House

5 Red House, Red House Lane, Bexleyheath, DA6 8JF
Tel: 020 8304 9878 www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Parking at Danson Park car park and walk to Red House (0.6 mile in each direction). Nearest rail connection Bexleyheath Station. Frequent local bus services.

The internationally significant home of the founder of the Arts & Crafts movement William Morris. The house was designed in 1859 by his friend, the architect Philip Webb. It was Webb's first house and was strongly influenced by Gothic medieval architecture. There is a delightful, peaceful garden, tea room and shop.

Open: March to late December Wed – Sun 11 – 5pm. Admission by pre-booked guided tour or self-guided (without booking) from 2pm. Last admission 30 mins before closing. Tel: 020 8304 9878 (Bookings line operates from 9:30am – 1:30pm, Tues – Sun) Email: redhouse@nationaltrust.org.uk Visits for schools and groups available on request at special rates.



Red House

Interesting Churches

If you wish to see inside the churches, you are advised to telephone in advance to ensure that the building will be unlocked. There may be special open days.

6 St Paulinus, Perry Street, Crayford, Tel: 01322 557532

Parts of this church date back to the 12th century but additions were made in the later medieval period. Look out for the memorial to the wife of the flamboyantly - named Admiral of the Fleet Sir Cloudesley Shovell. Since the churchyard was closed for burials, it is ecologically managed with the support of London Borough of Bexley and a team of voluntary workers.

7 Christ Church, Victoria Road, Erith, 01322 334729

19th century. Grade II* listed with a fine interior, featuring magnificent murals and stained glass windows.

8 St John the Baptist, West Street, Erith, Tel: 01322 332555

Another Norman Church which dates from the 12th century. The tower was erected a century later and then in the 19th century the north aisle was added and the whole building restored. The Wheatley Chapel was for centuries the burial place of successive Lords of the Manor. There are several brasses and a striking memorial to Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, who died in 1567.

9 St Mary the Virgin, Manor Road, Bexley, Tel: 01322 523457

The Domesday Survey of 1086 mentions that a church was present on the site. It was re-built in the 12th century and was much restored in the 19th century. The church is approached by a lych-gate and its tower is topped by an unusual 'pepper-pot' octagonal shingled spire. Queen Elizabeth II's great-grandparents were married in St Mary's Church in 1853.

10 All Saints, Rectory Lane, Fooks Cray, Tel: 020 8300 4343

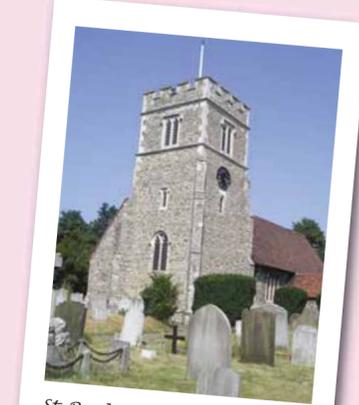
An ancient church, heavily restored in the 1860's and set in the attractive countryside of Fooks Cray Meadows. All Saints has a wooden bell tower with a shingled spire, and a 12th century font.

11 St James, North Cray Road, North Cray, Tel: 020 8300 4343

This richly furnished church is situated in beautiful rural surroundings. Rebuilt in the 19th century, it boasts a fine gateway and several historic tombs. There is also a monument by Chantry to Lady Ellenborough, who died in 1831. She was the sister of Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary 1812 – 1822, who lived in Loring Hall in North Cray. The interior features some fine carving and a pulpit dated 1637.

12 Greek Orthodox Church, Upper Wickham Lane, Welling, Tel: 020 8301 3858

Probably of 12th Century origin, this used to be the parish church of St Michael. Traces of medieval murals are still visible.



St. Paulinus Church, Crayford

Walks

Within Bexley there are many opportunities to follow waymarked walking routes. Some walks are local to Bexley, such as the Shuttle Riverway, but all connect with one or more of the wider Strategic walking networks: The Green Chain Walk, London Loop and The Thames Path. Walk London produces free leaflets for the Strategic Walks available to order as hard copy by phone from the Walk London Information Line on 0870 240 6094 or via email at info@walklondon.org.uk For information on the London Loop and other strategic walks in London you can also visit www.tfl.gov.uk/walking

SE London Green Chain Walk

The SE London Green Chain is a 40-mile network of footpaths which link together over 300 public and private open spaces stretching through south east London. The section of the SE London Green Chain which passes through Bexley extends 5.75 miles from the riverside promenade on the south bank of the Thames at Thamesmead through Lesnes Abbey Woods and other points of interest to Oxleas Wood. There is also a 2.5 mile branch from the riverside at Erith connecting with the main route at Lesnes Abbey. For more information call 020 8921 5028 or visit the website at www.greenchain.com

The Thames Path

The Thames Path links waterside attractions and also includes a cycle route. A special leaflet is available covering the section of The Thames Path through Bexley and Greenwich, called 'Exploring London's Working River'. The walk continues west through London and forms part of the Thames Path National Trail.

London Loop / Cray Riverway

The London Outer Orbital Path (Loop) is a 150-mile walk around London. The majority of the section which passes through Bexley follows the route of the Cray Riverway, a walk of approximately 10 miles starting in Fooks Cray Meadows extending northwards via Hall Place, where it links up with the Shuttle Riverway, and through Crayford Marshes to the Thames.

Shuttle Riverway

The Shuttle Riverway is a 5.75 mile walk which starts at the Green Chain Walk in Avery Hill Park and continues eastwards to Hall Place where it links to the London Loop/Cray Riverway. Where possible, the route follows riverside walks, but it also uses woods, parks and some linking roads.

The Cray Riverway and Shuttle Riverway leaflets are available free from the Tourist Information Centre at Hall Place. Copies of the leaflets are also available if you ring Strategic Planning & Development on 020 8308 7784 for the Shuttle Riverway leaflet or The Regeneration Unit on 020 8294 6742 for the Cray Riverway leaflet. The leaflets are also available to download from the Council's website www.bexley.gov.uk

Joyden's Wood

There are also attractive walks in Joyden's Wood, which is owned by The Woodland Trust. The wood consists of 320 acres of hardwoods and conifers. The Woodland Trust purchased the site in order to protect its special archaeological, wildlife and recreational value. Joyden's Wood is situated on the boundary of the London Borough of Bexley and the Borough of Dartford. For more details on the Woodland Trust visit its website at www.woodland-trust.org.uk

Nearest rail connection Bexley Station (half mile walk to the wood). Bus services run from Bexley to the Joyden's Wood Estate. There is a bus stop by the entrance to the wood in Summerhouse Drive (Route B12) Parking in Summerhouse Drive, with due regard for local residents.

13 Erith Town Walks

The 'Erith Art Trail' has been created to help you appreciate the new and historic works of art located in and around the town centre. The 'Erith Heritage Town Walk' is a walk around Erith highlighting the main buildings of architectural and historic importance.

Leaflets are available at Erith Library.

Erith and Crayford marshes

Just to the south of the Thames there are two areas of marshland covering over 500 hectares, much of which is used for grazing. This is some of the last remaining land of its type, although originally it was part of an extensive network of grazing marsh that stretched over much of south-east London, and much of northern Kent. Part of Erith Marsh in Bexley is a Local Nature Reserve, known as the Crossness Nature Reserve.

Events

The borough organises or hosts a number of events each year, the largest being the Danson Festival. Smaller events include outdoor concerts at Danson Park, outdoor theatre, a family history fair, an annual garden festival at Hall Place, Erith Riverside Festival and outdoor performances in town centres and parks. The London Open House weekend in September is an opportunity to visit properties which may be closed to the public normally, such as historic houses and local churches, or to take part in a guided walk.



Events at Hall Place

Places to stay

Whether visitors to Bexley are on a business trip or simply staying for pleasure, they will find a wide range of accommodation from luxury hotels to cosy bed & breakfasts. Further information is available from the Tourist Information Centre at Hall Place.

14 Holiday Inn, Black Prince Interchange Southwood Road, Bexley. 4-star hotel (107 guest rooms) Booking Tel: 0870 400 7201

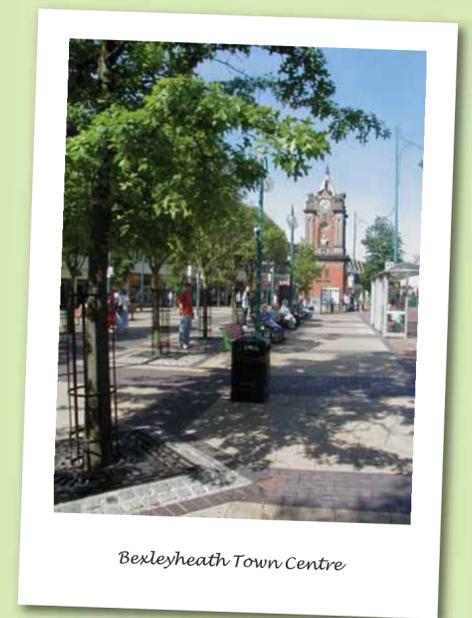
15 Bexleyheath Marriott Hotel, 1, Broadway, Bexleyheath 4-star hotel (142 Guest rooms) Tel: 020 8298 1000



Splash Park, Belvedere Recreation Ground

Shopping

The borough's premier shopping destination is Bexleyheath Town Centre with its indoor Mall. It houses many well-known stores and offers easy parking plus a wide range of facilities. The town centre is located close to hotels, attractions and entertainment venues. For other more traditional 'high street' shopping centres, visitors should head for one of the many town centres distributed across the borough. The largest centres are Bexleyheath, Sidcup, Welling, Crayford and Erith. Smaller centres such as historic Bexley Village offer more specialist shopping.



Bexleyheath Town Centre

Leisure and entertainment

Bexley offers a host of sporting and cultural activities to keep visitors entertained both day and night: from body building to relaxing in a jacuzzi and from going to the dogs, to seeing a play. This is just a selection of some of the attractions in Bexley. A varied programme of special events and activities for all ages take place throughout the year, from children's shows to concerts and from walks to talks. You can find out more by contacting the Tourist Information Centre at Hall Place, Libraries, or the Council's website www.bexley.gov.uk

Leisure Centres

www.leisurecentre.com

All house wet and dry facilities on-site

16 Sidcup Leisure Centre, Hurst Road, Sidcup Tel: 020 8302 0556

17 Crook Log Leisure Centre, Brampton Road, Bexleyheath Tel: 020 8304 9090

18 Erith Leisure Centre, Avenue Road, Erith Tel: 01322 350271

For further information on fitness and outdoor recreation visit the Leisure and Sports Services section of the Council's website.

Golf

It is advisable to telephone before you visit as green fees and dress codes vary.

19 Barnehurst Golf Course, Mayplace Road East – Nine hole 'pay and play' golf course Tel: 01322 523746

20 Thamesview Golf Centre, Fairway Drive – Nine hole 'pay and play', booking is only required at weekends Tel: 020 8310 7975

21 Bexleyheath Golf Club, Mount Road – Nine hole – green fees welcome – but best to contact before you visit Tel: Club Secretary 020 8303 6951

22 Sidcup Golf Club, r/o Hurstmere School, Hurst Road – 9 hole Tel: Secretary Steve Armstrong 020 8300 2150 Contact for non-member accessibility.

Pitch & Putt

Two nine hole pitch and putt courses and two putting greens are available at 23 Danson Park Pitch and Putt and 24 Sidcup Place Pitch and Putt

Greyhound racing

25 Crayford Greyhound Track, Stadium Way, Crayford 01322 557836

Ten-pin bowling

26 Bexleyheath Tenpin, Albion Road, Bexleyheath, at the western end of Bexleyheath Town Centre, some parking on site. Tel: 0871 871 2450

Cinema

27 Cineworld, 28-70 Broadway, Bexleyheath, at the eastern end of Bexleyheath Town Centre, incorporating a number of cafes/ restaurants with adjacent car park. For all Cineworld information and booking Tel: 0871 200 2000

Bingo

27 Gala Bingo, 28-70 Broadway, Bexleyheath, (adjacent to cinema) 020 8298 0910

Theatres

28 Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre, Beech Walk, Crayford, www.thegwt.org.uk Box Office 01322 526390

29 Playhouse Theatre, High Street, Erith, www.playhouse.org.uk Box Office 01322 350345

30 Edward Alderton Theatre, Brampton Road, Bexleyheath, www.edwardalderton.org Box Office 020 8301 5584

31 Old Barn Theatre & Rose Theatre, Rose Bruford College, Sidcup, (occasional public performances) 020 8308 2616

Tourist Information Centre

Hall Place & Gardens, Bourne Road, Bexley DA5 1PQ Tel: 01322 558676 Further details of all the sites, attractions, facilities and events mentioned in this guide are available from the Tourist Information Centre. Opening times as Hall Place Visitor Centre.
For further information about Bexley visit: www.bexley.gov.uk