The decisions have now been made for the Maldon District Conservation and Design Awards 2016. The awards were presented at a ceremony on the 1st of November from 2pm at the Friends Meeting House, Butt Lane, Maldon.

**Building Conservation and Design Winner**
The Tower, Lower Burnham Road, Latchingdon

**Building Conservation Highly Commended**
Church of St Lawrence Newland

**Design and Sustainability Highly Commended**
Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome Museum

**Sustainability Winner**
Wibblers Brewery, Southminster Hall Farm Barn

**Nature Conservation Winner**
Tollesbury Wick Nature Reserve

**Nature Conservation Highly Commended**
Bradwell Othona Coastal Park
All the winners of the 2016 awards
BUILDING CONSERVATION AND DESIGN
WINNER
The Tower, Lower Burnham Road, Latchingdon
This award is for the residential conversion of a redundant water tower. The tower was constructed in the 1930’s out of reinforced concrete but had been redundant for over thirty years. A small ground-floor extension accommodates the entrance hall and a finely crafted timber staircase. At first-floor level, the former water tank now comprises bedrooms, bathrooms and a gym. An extension has been constructed on top of half of the water tank, creating a second-floor level. This contains an open-plan living, dining and kitchen space. The top floor is illuminated by a glazed wall facing southwest which opens onto a large balcony. The design maximises the spectacular views across the River Crouch. The new extensions have been vertically clad in red cedar and the concrete painted in a subtle grey colour. Many of the internal fittings are industrial in style to reflect the building’s former function.

The judges were hugely impressed by what they agreed was an “outstanding” scheme. Its stunning design, quality materials and appropriate detailing have resulted in a building that is both “innovative and inspirational”.

Michael Thomas purchased the water tower with his brother and intended to convert it so that his elder daughter could live in it. The architect for the whole scheme was Mr Thomas’s daughter, Helen Thomas. The main contractor was Aston Group of Romford.
From left to right: Cllr Peter Elliot, Chairman of Maldon District Council; Cllr Beverley Acevedo, Ward Member for Althorne; Cllr Penny Channer, Heritage Representative for Maldon District Council; Dominic Woodford, Project Manager for The Tower, Latchgindon; Mike Thomas, owner of The Tower, Latchindon; Alan Thomas, Managing Director of Aston Group; Helen Thomas, architect; Liz Thomas, owner of The Tower.
BUILDING CONSERVATION HIGHLY COMMENDED

Church of St Lawrence Newland

The parish church of St Lawrence was rebuilt in 1877 and is grade II listed. This award is for the construction of an annexe extension on the south side of the church to provide disabled access, WC facilities, a small kitchen and a meeting / exhibition space.

The judges admired the complementary design and the use of quality materials. They were particularly impressed by the skilful manner in which an existing stone window has been adapted to become a doorway, using new stone which has been carved to match the existing mouldings. The new space and facilities are a great benefit to the church, enabling it to pursue a broader range of activities.

The architect was Tim Venn and the builders were Bakers of Danbury.
From left to right: Jane Pudney, Churchwarden; Bronwen Cook, Churchwarden; Cllr Peter Elliot, Chairman of Maldon District Council; Tim Venn, Architect; Cllr Penny Channer, Heritage Representative for Maldon District Council; John Barnes, Secretary of the Friends of St Lawrence Newland Church; Chris Norman, Bakers of Danbury
DESIGN HIGHLY COMMENDED AND SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLY COMMENDED

Stow Maries Aerodrome Museum

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome retains the largest known surviving group of Royal Flying Corps buildings in the UK. This award is for the creation of a new museum at the Aerodrome which celebrates and explains the site’s remarkable heritage. Housed within the former Engine Workshop buildings, the museum is part of a long-term project to conserve and develop this unique site as a heritage education centre.

The judges noted that the design of the museum was of an exemplary standard, its displays and exhibits (including life-like mannequins) eloquently expressing the story of the site, the bravery and sacrifices of the pilots of WWI, the earliest days of aerial combat, and the origins and proud tradition of the RAF. The museum, a shop and a meeting room have all been accommodated without detracting from the original character of the buildings. The judges felt that, as well as being beautifully designed, the project has commendable sustainability credentials; it has been driven by local volunteers and has an important role in promoting long-term interest in the Aerodrome.

Work began in late 2015, with the majority of the manpower being provided by the Stow Maries’ design team. Architectural and Trades expertise were all delivered in house, while Drake Design (Norwich) were contracted to deliver interpretation panels and interactive technologies designed from the brief delivered by the team. Further technical knowledge was provided by Dawn Patrol, who are expert modellers.
From left to right: Peter Elliot, Chairman of the Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome Trust; Nick Beattie, Volunteer (Estates), Anne Barratt, Volunteer (Admin); Cllr Peter Elliot, Chairman of Maldon District Council; Cllr Adrian Fluker, Stow Maries Aerodrome Trustee and Maldon District Councillor; Cllr Penny Channer, Heritage Representative for Maldon District Council; Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer for Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome Trust
SUSTAINABILITY WINNER
Wibblers Brewery, Southminster Hall Farm Barn
This award is for the repair of an important 18th-century barn at Southminster Hall Farm, and its conversion to house the popular Wibblers Brewery. The barn had fallen out of agricultural use several years ago, and roof leaks had led to areas of severe decay. Like many farmers who own similar historic buildings, the Fishers had long struggled to find the barn a new use which would fund the much-needed repairs whilst respecting the old building’s special character. The barn turned out to be ideally suited to use as a brewery. A later granary, which occupies half of the barn, has been converted to offices, while the brewing tubs and equipment have been housed in the rest of the barn, which remains open to its stunning queen-post roof. A tap room has been accommodated within a later lean-to.

The judges agreed that Wibblers Brewery wins “hands-down” in terms of sustainability. A valuable historic building, in which so much energy was invested in the past, has been brought back from the brink of dilapidation in an imaginative way. Historic farmyards have always been centres of local industry, and so the reintroduction of a thriving local industry seems highly appropriate.

The barn belongs to DJ Fisher Farms Ltd with John Fisher (father) and Ben Fisher (son) the driving force behind the project. CTS Services repaired the roof and timber-frame, Mike Otter submitted the planning applications, and Ian Wallaker Builders Ltd did the internal work. ‘Wibblers' was established in 2007, after nearly 20 years of home craft brewing experience, and has always been based in the Dengie area.
Interior of the barn occupied by Wibblers Brewery
From left to right: **John Fisher**, Director DJ Fisher (Farms) Ltd; **Cllr Peter Elliot**, Chairman of Maldon District Council; **Ben Fisher**, Director DJ Fisher (Farms) Ltd; **Cllr Penny Channer**, Heritage Representative for Maldon District Council; **Cllr Adrian Fluker**, Maldon District Council Ward Member for Southminster
NATURE CONSERVATION WINNER

Tollesbury Wick

This extensive site of former saltmarsh, comprising 242 hectares (600 acres) was acquired by Essex Wildlife Trust in 1993. Around 400 years ago the saltmarsh was enclosed by the beginnings of the present seawall, and the area represents one of the largest tracts of ancient, freshwater Grazing Marsh still remaining in Essex. Across two thirds of the reserve, the legacy of its saltmarsh origins is still apparent; the sinuous creeks and rills of the old saltmarsh remain today as subdued, fresh-water low ways and fleets. The area is highly important for overwintering birds, in particular brent geese, wigeon, teal, black tailed godwit, and is currently the base for the Trust’s livestock.

The award is given for a vast scheme of habitat creation and restoration. The work has primarily involved the recreation of saltmarsh topography and channels across 55 hectares (146 acres) at the northern end of the reserve, where the former habitat features had been destroyed for arable production in the late 1960’s. To achieve this, field drains had to be broken and sealed to prevent water loss. A perimeter earth bank was constructed to retain water, and trackways were raised to enable winter access. Old water controls have been replaced with new sluices to manage water levels, and a new storage lagoon has been dug to harvest excess winter rainfall. The re-wetting work here aimed to restore and reinstate these lost features to imitate its former legacy. As a result of all this work, Tollesbury Wick has the potential to become one of the best sites in Essex for breeding waders.

The judges were astonished by the sheer scale and vision of this project and agreed it had to be given the top award in the Nature Conservation category.
Above: Essex Wildlife Trust Warden, Jonathan Smith, showing the judging panel the extent of the work at Tollesbury Wick
From left to right: Dave Smart, ‘Primary Lead’ for the Tollesbury Wick project; Cllr Peter Elliot, Chairman of Maldon District Council; Jonathan Smith, Essex Wildlife Trust Warden for Tollesbury Wick Marshes; Cllr Penny Channer, Heritage Representative for Maldon District Council; Roger Wardle, consultant engineer for the landscape work at Tollesbury Wick.
NATURE CONSERVATION HIGHLY COMMENDED

Bradwell Othona Coastal Park

This award is for the conversion of a scrubby area on the grounds of the Othona Community, for the purpose of nature study. It lies adjacent to a pond which was originally dug for fire safety purposes, but is now a haven for wildlife. A dilapidated pig sty has been adapted as an education area. Adjoining the former pig sty, a courtyard seating area has been created, and from this a boardwalk leads to dipping platforms. A bird hide has also been built.

The judges thought this was an excellent project. They admired the educational facilities on offer and the fact the work had been done by volunteers. The structures have been built in a way that does not detract from the character of the area. The boardwalk has been printed with shadows of phragmites, which the judges felt was remarkably attractive and appropriate.

The design was drawn up by community artist Angenita Hardy-Teekens as part of her MA Sculptural Practice, architect Susanne Kelly and Peter Baird builder and site manager. The work was carried out by volunteers working in Othona.
Above: interior of the Resource Centre

Above: decorative tiles in the Resource Centre
From left to right: Kevin Bruce, School Groups Coordinator for Othona; Susan Kelley, architect; Cllr Peter Elliot; Chairman of Maldon District Council; Angenita Hardy-Teekens, artist and designer; Cllr Penny Channer, Heritage Representative for Maldon District Council; Peter Baird, builder
This year’s judging panel, standing on the sea wall at Bradwell Othona Coastal Park

*From left to right:* Matt Wilson, Countryside and Coast Manager, Maldon District Council; Simon Brady, representing Woodham Mortimer and Hazeleigh Parish Council; Clr Penny Channer, Chairman of the Judging Panel; John Came of the Maldon Society; Veronica Smith from the Essex Regional Group of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; Hilary Brightman, Conservation Architect based in Latchingdon, and Jeff Edwards of the Burnham History Society;