Teigan plea is renewed

ESSEX Police have repeated an appeal for information to find 16-year-old Teigan Allison, who is missing from Tilbury.

She was last seen on Tuesday, 17 October and said she would return on Thursday, 19 October, but didn't.

Teigan is considered to be vulnerable and there is concern for her welfare.

She has links to Stratford and often visits the Westfield London shopping centre. Teigan has shoulder length black hair and was last seen wearing a black and red striped top, black leggings and trainers.

Anyone with information on her whereabouts is asked to contact police at Grays on 101.

Police link AGM

THURROCK'S Independent Advisory Group to Essex Police annual general meeting will take place on Wednesday, 8 November from 6.15pm to 8.30pm at the Sikh Temple, 6 Maidstone Road, Grays.

Speaker is equality campaigner John Azah and afterwards there will be a question and answer session with group chairman Neil Woodbridge and Richard Baxter, the chief inspector for the Thurrock policing district.

Medics act after parents' frustration is highlighted

A 17-YEAR-OLD epilepsy sufferer in need of urgent care has now had her next appointment with a neurological consultant moved up to early December from February 2018.

Parents rage over lack of expert help

Katie Lay, who can have up to four epileptic seizures a day and has now regressed to the mental age of a five-year-old, previously featured in the Thurrock Independent, where Chadwell St Mary based parents Rob and Kiley Lay expressed their disgust that Katie would have to wait so long. The reason given to them by staff at Basildon Hospital's Children's A&E Unit was that Essex doesn't have enough neurological consultants.

Following the article, the trust in charge of running Basildon Hospital have vowed to continue their efforts to recruit more specialist doctors and said they hope to achieve full staffing levels by February.

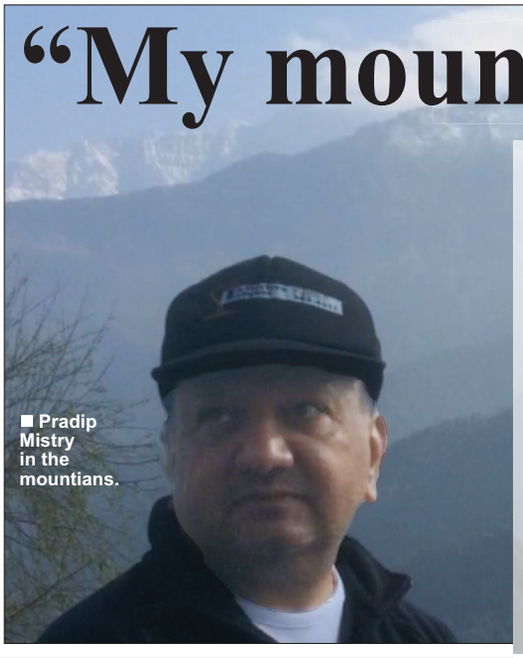
But they also confirmed that following the family's visit to A&E on 20 October, where an urgent referral was requested, that Katie will see an epilepsy specialist in early December.

A spokesperson for Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said: "After her appointment with a paediatric consultant, a referral and appointment was made for the patient to see a neurologist.

"Following a subsequent attendance at our A&E department, a request for an urgent referral was made and an appointment with a consultant who specialises in epilepsy was arranged for early December.

"There is a national shortage of neurology consultants and the trust has been proactively working to recruit specialist doctors, and it is likely we will achieve full staffing levels by February."

"My mountain adventure"



■ Pradip Mistry in the mountians.

A THURROCK man raised more than £3,250 for Age UK Essex after taking part in a trek through the Himalayan region of Nepal.

Pradip Mistry is an international speaker, writer, and new life style coach, having founded Lifesmistry, an organisation helping coach self discovery and preparing people for retirement.

And putting himself in the forefront of discovery he joined the trek organised by Age UK Essex, where he is a Befriending and Voice Network volunteer.

Pradrip began his preparation six months before setting out, saying: "My training started from the day I agreed and registered to take part in the trek. From thereon, my physical and mental psyche kicked in and I was able to maintain a strict diet and training regime. For six months, I trained in the Cotswolds, Hadleigh's Olympic mountain bike track and several rough terrains in beautiful Essex along the River Thames."

The trek took ten days after Pradip, along with a party of other fundraisers, flew into Kathmandu where they were briefed by an experienced trek guide.

He continued: "Next day we flew into Pokhara with a short drive to our starting point at Nayapool. From there we walked continuously for six days, stopping at tea houses and staying the nights at simple guest houses.

"We walked through some treacherous terrain following the devastation from the Nepal earthquake two years earlier. Most of the villages en route have been rebuilt as were the main traffic roads with building work still continuing. Some of the trekking routes are still uncleared and challenging to pass through.

"I met many locals and they were always very warm, friendly and pleasant. Being able to speak Hindi, it was enjoyable to engage in conversations with them. The villages were spotlessly clean and decorated with colourful prayer flags (similar to our bunting flags).

"The guest houses were very simple, single beds, some with a pillow and blanket. However, I carried my own sleeping bag. The walls were very thin, with very poor lighting and no heating at all. At Gorepani (last village before the summit) there was no electricity, so the LED torch I carried helped with unpacking and repacking our luggage. Heating was an adapted oil drum with a tube for a chimney and a hole cut out for wood burning. All guests dried their wet clothing and boots huddled around the wood burner.

"The meals were simple, delicious and ideal for a slow release of energy. My favourite meal was "Dal Bhat" which in England is a vegetarian Thali. The dish consisted of rice, two vegetable curries, lentil/pulse soup, pickles, salad and poppadums.

"I enjoyed meeting many other trekkers, traveling in both directions. They came from the UK, USA, and several European countries including Russian speaking states, Chinese, Indians, Koreans and many more. They were of different age, size, and physical abilities and in differing preparedness for trekking. At Tadapani, we met two French children aged under 10 and going through some studies with their parents before their meal. We even enjoyed a sing-along with a large Austrian group at lunch time when it had been raining all day. It certainly brightened our day.

"We were accompanied by five Sherpas, including two women. Each Sherpa carried approximately 25-30 kilos. They were extremely resilient and walked with us every day, often arriving at our guest house well before we did.

"The highlight for me was reaching Poon Hill Summit on the fifth day, blessed with clear weather, considering the previous two days we endured torrential rainfall and prolonged hailstones. The highlight of the trek is the breath-taking view of the Purnima mountain range.

"We started our climb to the summit in pitch darkness at 4am, the path lit by my LED head lamp. The final 100 meters was the most challenging at high altitude. The meaning of being out of breath took on a profound meaning for me. After every five steps, I had to wait to catch my breath. My heart must have been pounding overtime and felt it was about to burst out of my chest.

"Reaching the summit was such a relief and an overwhelming joy at seeing the glorious sunrise. I was just stunned and excited. The exhaustion disappeared and I ran around the Poon Hill area like an excited child full of energy.

"I am indebted to all those who gave me moral support on this journey and all who donated generously to raising funds for Age UK Essex."

If you would like to find out more about Pradip, check out his website: www.lifesmistry.co.uk/

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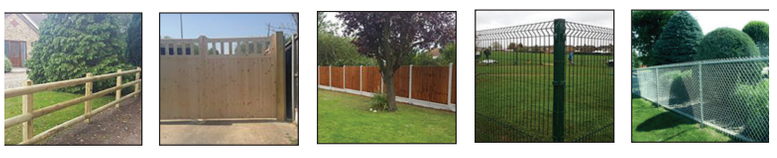

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Campaign to help make a difference

THURROCK Council has sought to freshen up their approach to finding more potential foster carers in the borough by launching a new campaign.

The 'Make a Difference' campaign launched on Saturday and will be promoted across the borough after being created by working with existing foster carers.

Thurrock Council has more than 300 looked after children and is in need of foster carers, particularly to look after teenagers and sibling groups.

Cllr Sue Little (pictured with mayor Cllr Tunde Ojetola at the launch), portfolio holder for adults and children's social care said: "Securing a stable home for our children in care who are no longer able to live with their families is important and we are

looking for carers from a wide range of backgrounds. You need to be able to offer a spare bedroom and time to children who have experienced upset or neglect in their lives.

"We are facing a shortage of foster carers in the borough. We're looking for people who have space in their hearts and home to make a real difference.

"By joining us, you become part of our fostering team and will receive the help, guidance and support you need right from the start throughout your fostering career.

"So if you think you have what it takes or you know someone who could become a Thurrock foster carer then we want to hear from you. Why not visit us at one of our drop in sessions for an informal chat to find out more."

If you think you can make a difference to the lives of children and young people in Thurrock contact Thurrock Council's fostering service on freephone 0800 652 1256 or go to thurrock.gov.uk/fostering for more information.

● Thurrock Fostering services next information drop in is in Committee Room 2, Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, from 4pm to 8pm.