

FAMILY OF TRAGIC TOT CELEBRATE CASH DRIVE ANNIVERSARY

£61,000 in a year for Angelina appeal

By KATY ISLIP
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A FAMILY who endured the loss of an adored child to a rare form of cancer have now raised more than £61,000 in her memory.

When she was only three, Angelina Vidler was diagnosed with Wilms' tumour, a form of cancer which attacks the kidneys and renal system.

She was treated at London's Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, but died in 2008.

In February last year, parents Hilary and Carl Vidler, set up the Angelina Our Star appeal, in memory of their daughter, with the aim of raising money for the hospital and awareness of Wilms' tumour.

A year on, the appeal has raised £61,341, her family revealed on Friday.

Mrs Vidler, 40, said: "We are just a small local appeal and considering it has just been us and a group of friends, it has been fantastic.

"£61,000 in a year is amazing. It just shows everyone's commitment and how much they care.

"It's hard work, but it has been worth it."

The eventual aim is to raise £100,000 for the hospital. Of the



■ Celebrating – Hilary Vidler, left, with appeal team members Carla Harris and Karen Gough at the anniversary party. Inset: Angelina

total raised so far, £36,000 has been donated to the Kiss it Better appeal, with the remainder earmarked for a cell research funding bid by Angelina's consultant, Dr John Andersen. Kiss it Better raises money for research into childhood cancers.

Events organised by Angelina's family have included a sunrise to sunset football match last May and in October, supporter Ann Kennelly won a place on the Fourth Plinth living art exhibition in Trafalgar Square, using her 60 minutes to tell people about the appeal and

its aims. In November last year, a Peter Pan-themed party was held to celebrate what would have been Angelina's seventh birthday.

The family held an appeal anniversary party at the weekend and the next event will be a barn dance on May 8 at the Potato Barn, in Shopland Road, Rochford.

Mrs Vidler said: "Angelina was so popular in her short little life.

"She did so much and touched so many people. Her friends talk about Angelina in such a lovely way, and have a little garden dedicated to her at school. They remember the good times and the

happy times, not the sadness."

Supported by relatives and friends, her parents have stayed strong for Angelina's brother, William, five, and sister India, three, as well as sharing their experiences with others.

For more information about the appeal and to buy tickets for the barn dance, e-mail info@angelinaourstar.org.uk

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Two MPs unhappy about accepting 1.5% pay rise

A SOUTH Essex MP says she won't be accepting the controversial 1.5 per cent pay rise members are due to get next month – and at least one other may turn it down.

Angela Smith, Labour MP for Basildon and East Thurrock, said she would not be taking her rise, while Bob Spink,



■ Mrs Smith – no rise

Independent MP for Castle Point says he was "thinking carefully" about it.

The increase – nearly £1,000 a year – will come into effect on April 1, boosting MPs' salaries to £65,737 a year. It has sparked criticism in the wake of the expenses scandal and with millions of workers facing pay freezes or cuts.

Mrs Smith said she would not be taking her rise, but added: "This is something which has been decided by an independent review and is something individual MPs must decide whether



■ Dr Spink – considering it

or not they will take."

Dr Spink said: "I think this is highly insensitive, given the current climate of expenses abuse and public anger. I have not pushed for this and I will have to think very carefully about whether I will take it.

"I am not going to say now whether I will take it, because I think that would be little more than political gesturing this close to an election."

The increase is based on average increases given to 15 other groups of public sector workers.

Church wants 1,000 to walk

● CHURCH leaders want to sign up 1,000 walkers for the a 10km May Day walk around their parish.

Fr Lee Bennett of St Mary the Virgin Church, in Benfleet High Road, is urging residents to come and walk along St Mary's Way, a trail which runs around the parish borders.

The route takes in ancient woodland in Thundersley Glen and estuary views from the Hadleigh Downs and should take about three hours.

There is a £10 entry fee and walkers are free to collect sponsorship for a charity of their choice, if they wish.

For entry forms and more information, e-mail 10kchallenge@stmarysbenfleet.co.uk

Meet your local police

● RESIDENTS in Southend's Milton ward are being invited to a neighbourhood action panel meeting this week.

The meeting will offer the chance to raise concerns directly with police and hear what is being done in their area to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

It starts on Thursday, at 6.15pm, at Southend Civic Centre, in Victoria Avenue.

For details, call neighbourhood specialist officers for the ward, Pc Michelle Bond and Pc Stan Ferris, on the team mobile, 07817 968114.

Office plan for surgery

● A FORMER surgery could become offices, if Castle Point Council agrees.

The surgery, in Meppel Avenue, Canvey, has been empty since the Essex Ultrasound and Medical Services left the site to move to the new Central Canvey Primary Care Centre last year.

The owner has applied for permission to change the use of the building from a doctor's surgery to offices.

● CASTLE Point's prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate would like the voting age to be 16. Julian Ware-Lane made his views known on a new website, which aims to give voters an insight into candidates' opinions on electoral reform.

● MARINE and Offshore Radio will be the subject of the talk at tomorrow's meeting of the South Essex Amateur Radio Society. It starts at 8pm at South Benfleet Primary School in the High Road.