

WE'VE GOT A NEW BUS SHELTER

But no busses, for up to four weeks

On April 22nd an excited villager emailed me to tell me we finally had a serviceable bus shelter in Birchanger. So naturally I dashed out of the house armed with my trusty state of the art digital camera! And I duly took the photo you can see further down the page. I was very impressed with the workmanship and the finish of the shelter, (But, less than impressed with the footprint some one had made in the base, which should persuade Archeologists in the future that neanderthals were still existing in the 21st century).

The new shelter looked like it would satisfy the most transport hungry aspirations of the village's bus users. But as so often happens in Birchanger the powers that be had a joke up their sleeves to frustrate everyone all over again. On May 11th, with no apparent warning, Birchanger Lane was closed at the bottom end to allow work on a water main to take place. Which of course means that the busses, which usually rip through the village at break neck speeds would be unable to get all the way through. Mindful of their responsibilities the bus company provided a shuttle bus that would take passengers into Stansted and deposit them outside the Feathers public house, where they could wait for a further 30 minutes for a 301 from Saffron Walden to take them into Bishop Stortford. Quite why its possible to go one way towards Stansted but not the other way to Bishop's Stortford where all the shops are is a mystery but I suppose in days gone by the shuttle bus would not have been laid on at all and everyone would have to traipse down to intercept the 301 at Birchanger corner. So we should all be grateful for what we've got!



No doubts about where you are
when you get off a bus at this stop!

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Still time to have your say on the runway 2 application

At the time of writing there is still no sign of a Government Call In for the Runway 2 Application. This does not mean that it won't happen, it simply means that the government expects Uttlesford District Council to do the bulk of the work in processing the application. This is both a costly and time consuming job. It is certain to be called in eventually, but the 16 week consultation period still stands.

Your responses to the application must be in by June 26th. There are some 38 separate applications, but they would all fail if the principal of a Second Runway at Stansted Airport Fails. Your response should focus on the issues which concern you most about the application, whether you are in favour of it or not. If it is the new junction which concerns you, you can focus on that, or if air quality and railway system access are of a concern you could focus on them. There are many other issues such as increased night flights and the development of the airport car parks, which you think are important for and might affect Birchanger and the surrounding areas.

Thirteen listed buildings are proposed to be moved, including the Three Horse Shoes, and the village green at Mole Hill Green.

I have large copies of the plans for remodelling Junction 8 and for the new Junction 8b, which will take up a large slice of Birchanger, and involve bunds and a lot more lighting. I can arrange for you to see these if you ring me on 812793.

Tot Lane is NOT the local tip

Although you may not believe it the District Council are forever clearing litter in Tot Lane. Lately it has got a great deal worse, and we can only hope it is not because of the development at the Rochford Nursery site. Somebody out there seems to think that it is just the place to dump any old unwanted goods. It is as if we had put up a sign saying "Junk Welcome." We would appreciate your help in trying to stop this menace. Please, if you do see anyone offloading their rubbish in the lane, take the number of their car. It is now an offence punishable by a heavy fine to fly tip anywhere. The District Council will prosecute, and should be called on 01799 510510 when someone is seen and their number is taken.

The future of Tot Lane is still undecided. It may eventually become a bridle way. It could be inconvenient

for some, but would be welcomed by others. At least it would be more difficult to dump things then! Throughout Birchanger Lane also there is far too much rubbish. Most of it seems to come from those who indulge in a take away at the Service Station, and finish gobbling down their inevitably unhealthy meal in time to fling the packaging out into the lane. Those of us who live on the lane are very tired of trying to clear up.

Recreation Ground.

The state of the recreation ground is little better than Tot Lane. The lighter evenings are here and some older people use it for late night drinking with a bit of bottle smashing thrown in. The result is that many parents find that it is too unsafe a place to bring their young children as there is simply too much glass thrown about. It is cleared very regularly, but it is very hard to keep up with the damage being done.

The teen shelter has suffered. The young people who fund raised to provide this for the village have moved on, and it seems that their successors do not value it as they did. Lights have been broken, so the lighting has had to be switched off indefinitely, something nobody wanted to do. It will not be repaired until there is at least a little evidence that those who use the recreation ground are able to behave responsibly.

This of course is very hard on the parents with young children who do no damage whatsoever. We do our best to ensure that the equipment will be safe to use, but please watch out for the glass which we do try hard to clear but which seems to be smashed on a nightly basis. A great deal has been invested here, and it is a tragedy that a minority decide to roll over the swings so that the frames can be used as goal posts, and make it difficult to sit in the shelter.

To those who are doing the damage, if you ever actually bother to read this, and to the parents of the older children who just might occasionally look at the magazine, please respect what others have worked hard to provide and maintain. If you want extra goal posts please restore the swings after you have wrapped them around the frames. You are by no means the only pebbles on the beach!

Youth Council near to formation

It is a great pity that the recreation ground vandals don't do something useful for themselves occasionally. If they are under 18 the opportunity will be here shortly in the form of the Youth Council which is to be established shortly. One of the things the Youth Council will be able to do will be to bid for money for somewhere to hang out

in the village. It will involve some work and fund raising on the part of the Youth Council, but surely even the hardest nut will think it worth trying. Two members of the Parish Council and a dedicated Youth Officer are also on hand to help.

New Youth Bus to Visit Birchanger.

The old youth bus was a popular venue for those aged between 13 and 19, until sadly it broke down irreparably a few months ago. The good news is that the Youth Bus has started to visit Birchanger again. It will park in the Church Hall car park on Thursdays May 22nd, June 5th and 19th, and July 3rd and 17th between 7.15 and 9.15 pm. This is for a trial period only, and the message is "use it or lose it" as the County Council cannot subsidise facilities which are simply not taken up. For further information please contact 01279 772801, 087768 261830, or contact simon.fenn@essexcc.gov.uk

Leaving School and no idea what to do next?

Exams will soon be over, and for many youngsters the much anticipated and dreaded school leaving day looms. There are some who know exactly what they are going to do with their lives, but a great many people have a really hard time finding out just what they would like to do next. A new initiative known as U Projects aims to offer a week long course to everyone who is really not sure where to go and what to do next. To find out more please contact the telephone numbers and email address listed above. This course is aimed at year 11 pupils and will explore some interesting and unusual options with you.

Low crime figures in Birchanger ? Really!

Officially crime figures in Birchanger Village remain very low, although this is hard to believe when owners find their car windows smashed and vandalism is rife. The hunt is also on to find the "Cinderella" with a size 9 shoe who left their footprint in the foundation of the new bus shelter. This incurred the council further expense to repair, and this of course will have to be met through the Parish Precept as well as delaying the erection of the shelter. No doubt the owner of the foot print is feeling very pleased with himself, but there is a fair idea of who the slipper fitted and the bill will be in the post.

The police bus is to make a return visit to the centre of the village on a monthly basis starting shortly. Residents will be able to talk about their concerns to a police officer in privacy.

Meanwhile many people are finding that the levels in their oil tanks are going down at an alarming rate. It has been cold, but not that cold and the oil levels seem to go down dramatically in just one night. With oil at the its current prices it is not surprising that the theft of oil is yet another career move for the habitual thief, but please check your levels, try to secure your supplies if at all possible and report any sudden dips in the level to the police immediately.

An Invitation to a Lamb Roast

It is hard to imagine the devastation which runway 2 will inflict on the village, but if you can picture a sky which is never dark from junction 8b, and a sky line dominated by tall buildings on the site of the current car parks, you will come close. It will be Heathrow on the outskirts of Birchanger. It is hard to imagine that this is what anyone who lives here really thinks is a good thing for the village. Then there is the thought of the interminable noise. Unfortunately fighting airport expansion is not cheap, and SSE is holding a number of events throughout the year to try to raise funds to fight the proposals at the inevitable inquiry next year. In January there was a very successful and enjoyable Burns Night. There will now be a Lamb Roast on July 20th in the garden at Moorswood, with cover should the weather decide to be unkind. Tickets are limited to 75 and will cost £15 each. There will be music, good food and much more. The tickets are expected to sell quickly, so to reserve yours, please call me the SSE office on 870558 or myself on 812793.

How to "Mend" your children's eating habits

Obesity among children has dramatically increased in the last few years. This simply results in poor health in later life. The District Council is trying to do something about this and last year began a project called Mend. Parents with children aged between 9 and 13 who are becoming overweight are invited to enrol them in a course which aims to help both them and their families to lead an all round healthier lifestyle. The children learn about and participate in physical exercise and what actually are fast and slow release foods, how to always read the contents labels before they buy food, with visits to the supermarkets to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice.

The first course has proved to be a success, and it is planned to run a further course shortly. If you are interested, please contact Gaynor Bradley on 01799 510348.

Free home to School transport?

There have been some recent changes made to Essex County Council's home to school transport policy for those who are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit with children in years 4, and 6. To be eligible you must live between 3 and 4 miles from the school. Call 0845 6032200 for further information.

Welcome Pack For Rochfords Residents.

If you are a voluntary organisation, or perhaps you have a service to offer, there is still time to include a few lines about your organisation or service in the Welcome Pack which will be distributed to every new household on the Rochfords Estate.

There will be a small charge for commercial organisations, but this is an ideal way to introduce your services to new customers. If you are interested, please call me on 812793.

A NEW HEATH CENTRE AT FOREST HALL ROAD

Plans to boost modern healthcare provision for Stansted and neighbouring residents have been unveiled by West Essex Primary Care Trust (PCT). Here, the PCT's chief executive, Aidan Thomas, explains how local people will benefit from the proposed changes.

For too long residents of Stansted and surrounding areas have missed out on the modern healthcare facilities they are entitled to expect.

This doesn't mean they haven't had first class care from the doctors, nurses and other health professionals working locally. But it does mean they haven't had access to a full range of services under one roof that many people elsewhere take for granted.

For years now the NHS has been trying to find a solution to the problem of ensuring you have access to a full range of modern services of which we can all be proud. We need to provide new facilities for Stansted GP surgery and the community clinic now as the GPs' lease is soon to expire and existing primary care services and facilities cannot cater for significant increase in the population served by the surgery. Our proposal is to site the new primary care centre at the former Rochford Nurseries site, off Forest hall Road.

Now we have the opportunity to develop a modern state-of-the art primary care centre, bringing together an enhanced GP surgery with community health facilities in modern, comfortable surroundings. The new centre will also provide facilities for services that have had to relocate, such as district nursing and chiropody, and create the additional capacity required for the expected population increase. It will also mean that for many people they can have tests and treatment much closer to home instead of having to travel to hospital further afield. This site is the only option available to the PCT that offers sufficient land to build a facility to accommodate current primary health care and community services, as well as local population growth and flexibility to develop more services.

Let me acknowledge the disappointment of many people that we have been unable to secure a village centre site. We share that disappointment. It's not for want of trying that we have been unable to find an alternative viable site. More than ten sites have been evaluated over as many years. Alternative viable options and time have run out. However, we have undertaken to work with parish councils in ensuring we have fully evaluated all these sites giving you the confidence that there is no other alternative site that will bring together all the services local people need.

We will work with our statutory and voluntary partners to ensure there are good transport links to and from the new centre and develop new pharmacy arrangements to avoid unnecessary journeys for people collecting prescriptions.

Some of the benefits to you include:

- access to an NHS dentist, which is not currently available in Stansted
- access to investigations such as blood tests, ultrasound and echocardiography (ECG)
- treatment facilities for leg ulcers, chiropody and extended minor surgery
- access to psychological therapy services
- cardiac and chest rehabilitation
- pulmonary rehabilitation
- pre-surgical assessment clinic where patients are assessed locally prior to admission to hospital for surgery
- access for patients to a wide range of health promotional information.

This development will not compete with Stansted's village centre shops and services. There are no plans for a pharmacy on the site.

You and other members of the local community are our most important partners in the planning of better health services. We want to hear what you think about this proposed centre and the services you would like to see it provide.

A leaflet describing the proposed improvements to local health facilities and the options considered for its location will be widely available and we will also be holding local meetings to explain what is proposed and to hear your feedback.

Monday 2 June 7.30pm Mountfitchet Maths and Computer College, Foresthall Road

Wednesday 4 June 12.30 to 1.30pm St Johns Church Hall, St Johns Road

Friday 13 June 7.30 pm, St Johns Church Hall, St Johns Road

Please feel free to send me your views and ideas. Write to me, Aidan Thomas, at West Essex Primary Care Trust, The Laurels, St Margaret's Hospital, The Plain, Epping, Essex CM16 6TN or e-mail the PCT at mail@westessexpct.nhs.uk. Alternatively please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 783 3396 to request a leaflet.

The Youth Bus is Back

The Essex Youth Bus has returned to Birchanger after a short absence. Some of you may already have seen it parked in the car park of the Village Hall. The Youth Bus is open to young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years old and visits Birchanger on alternate Thursdays from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

The idea behind the Youth Bus is to offer a place where young people can get out of the house, meet socially, enjoy each other's company and ask advice on any concerns they may have. The Youth Bus has a TV, Xbox, CD player and refreshments on tap. Simon Fenn is the new Area Youth Worker and he and his team will be on hand to chat to anyone who visits the bus.

And that's not all. There are funds available from Essex County Council to develop projects and activities for young people within the village, to buy equipment, improve facilities – you may want more sports equipment on the recreation ground - help with things like paying for shared taxis for trips to local events or mini buses to take you further afield, such as arranging ice skating trips or similar outings. It's up to you, it's free and would be supported by Simon Fenn and his team.

BUT the ideas and initiatives must come from the young people in the village. Okay, things may be slow to start but it only takes a very small group of young people to visit the bus on a regular basis in order to get things moving in our village.

There are only 5 more visits before the Summer holiday, So come on, all you teenagers who are constantly telling us you have nothing to do, support the Youth Bus or this village will lose, not only the bus, but with it the chance to gain so much more.

The next visits are 22nd May, 5th June, 19th June, 3rd July, 17th July.

For more information you can contact Simon Fenn directly on 01279 772801 / 07768 261830 or by email at simon.fenn@essexcc.gov.uk or if you text... then you'll be sent a reminder text that the bus is coming to Birchanger. Alternatively you can chat to either me, Jayne Devine, on 01279 814723 or Maria Davy on 01279 816490.

GO ON GIVE IT A TRY, JUST ONCE!

BIRCHANGER SOCIAL CLUB

BAR/ WAITING STAFF
REQUIRED

EVENINGS AND
WEEKENDS

CONTACT THE STEWARD

01279 813441

SCHOOL NEWS

It was an Easter Holiday which seemed for some parents to have been going on for a very long time. None of the schools across the county council boundaries synchronised with each other this year. There had been promises that Education Authorities were going to work together on this, but after two easier years they seem to have forgotten all about it.

This makes life incredibly difficult for working parents. In some extreme cases a whole month of childcare had to be arranged. It is no wonder that parents have to take their children on holiday somewhere or other in term time, although Birchanger School's attendance record is very good.

Apart from this it is always a very hard working time at the start of the summer term. The OFSTED inspection may now be a distant memory, but the religious work of the school has to be inspected following an Ofsted inspection, and it is the term in which Year 2 and Year 6 children take their SATS tests. Like them or loath them, they come around with monotonous yearly regularity, and they mean that the start of the summer term is a very hard working one. After that there are summer sports, a few days away and the ever popular school play to consider.

Plenty of School clubs on offer

There is something for everyone again this term at Birchanger School. There is a chance to improve your football skills, get extra help with your homework, an opportunity to learn about the garden and acquire some new skills, to join the choir and as it is supposed to be summer, to enjoy a game of rounders. Breakfast club is back on a Friday morning, with the very special Golden Games Time Sessions on a Friday afternoon.

It is hoped to restart the Knitting Circle, which as well as teaching the children knitting schools, also creates blankets to send to orphanages overseas. Everyone is invited to join the Knitting Circle whether they are a knitter or not on Thursdays between 2.45 and 3.45 pm.

A Successful Season For Birchanger School's Football Team.

Birchanger School moved several places up the league last term thanks to a good winning streak in the final leg of the season. To celebrate this the team presented Coach Culpin with some flowers and a special bottle to say a very big thank you for all the hard work she has put in with the team to achieve their success. Congratulations everyone.

Good news and bad

Bad news first. The PTA at the school work very hard to make life more enriching for everyone in many varied ways. It can be by buying additional books and equipment, by putting on entertaining events for the children and by contributing to what is becoming ever increasingly expensive school trips. They had worked hard and had necessarily spent money on a proposed Race Night at the school, but it seemed that a large number of parents simply were not bothered enough to make the effort to support them.

The money on this occasion was to go towards helping to lower the cost of an educational trip to the Isle of Wight.

Lowering the cost of this trip would have benefited all who are going. Unfortunately the lack of support may mean that the school will not even entertain the trips in future years, as without the necessary fundraising they will prove to be too expensive. The evening had promised to be very enjoyable and innovative for everyone.

The Good News is that the children are far more interested in making their school trip accessible for everyone. Class 4 have been making and selling cakes to help to raise money, and the rest of the school joined in as one with the staff for a pyjama day. The residents of Birchwood were treated to the amazing sight of everyone arriving to school in their pyjamas, complete with a cuddly toy. All the staff joined in and some of the parents as well. Each child contributed £1 to the funds for the trip. The project was managed by Year 6 children and a lot of fun was had by all, as would have been experienced at the Race Night.

Finding out about local food

The children in Classes 3 and 4 had an away day at Writtle College. The theme was farming in Essex and Essex produce. The children had a chance to try their hands at milking a cardboard cow, while the animals looked on. They watched sheep being sheered and held newly hatched chicks. They also saw farm machinery close up, and followed the journey that wheat makes from sowing, harvesting, and milling the flour to actually baking the bread.

They also had the opportunity to sample local produce, and some intrepid spirits tried local oysters. Even the downpour of hail and sleet did not dampen anyone's enthusiasm. It was a muddy group who finally made it back to the school at the end of the day

New nest box cameras bring excellent pictures

Thanks to the far sighted generosity of last year's Year 6 children who gave nest box cameras to the school, the children are now able to watch the blue tits lay and incubate their eggs.

Via a link to the computer the children are able to watch all the activity in the nest box and hopefully the baby blue tits as they are reared. There are 7 chicks and the parents are working at all hours to feed them. The children keep a daily log of the events in the nest. The gentleman from the RSPB was very impressed by the action so far, and the pictures are amazingly clear. It will be interesting to see how many baby blue tits are successfully reared. Some of the children were asked what they thought of the birds and Naomi Bates told us "They are very cute and the eggs were very tiny!"



Recipe of the Month, Sue's Sheek Kebabs

This is a new feature for readers. I thought an easy recipe per month would be a good idea. So if you can pass on any of your cooking tips and recipes to your fellow villagers, it would be appreciated. This month I thought a quick and easy starter, it is the barbeque season, and these are versatile enough to be cooked either indoors or out.

SHEEK KEBABS

- 500g Mince [1lb]
- 1 small onion, peeled and grated.
- 5ml spoon plain flour [tsp.]
- 15ml spoon garam masala [tabs]
- salt/ freshly ground pepper to taste
- pinch chilli powder
- 5ml mixed dried herbs or 2x 5ml spoons chopped fresh herbs [include in this plenty of fresh mint]
- 15ml lemon juice
- 2x15ml plain yoghurt
- 1) Mix everything together, season to taste.
- 2) Shape into 12 portions, of sausage type shapes and chill until ready.

3) Either grill on a piece of foil in your grill pan indoors or grill on the barbeque, in a fold over mesh container that has been well greased.

MINT CHUTNEY

[optional but excellent accompaniment]

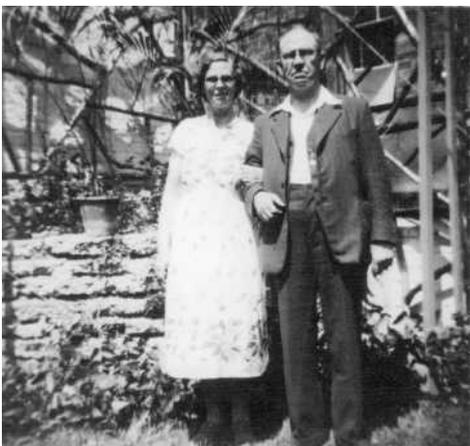
- 2 Tabs plain yoghurt
- 1 Tabs lemon juice
- Large pinch garam masala and chilli powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tabs chopped fresh mint
- 1-2 Tabs mango chutney
- 1] For the chutney mix all the ingredients together and leave to mature!

Here's a nice item from our youngest contributor. He is Cain Rogers aged 6 years nine months and produced this on a Saturday afternoon while being looked after by his Aunt and Uncle. (I have made one small spelling correction) Ed!

My family is weird, because my Uncle drives like a lunatic and my Auntie takes a lot of time to do her shopping. My Sister is pretty but naughty. My Mum and Dad never stop going to Portugal, so I miss them. My Nannie is good at stitching and my baby cousin is cute!

AND I'M PERFECT

DO YOU KNOW THIS LADY?



Family history search - Do you remember the lady in this photograph? She may have been a friend or neighbour.

I am searching for the lady in the photograph, her name was Elizabeth Kell Martin. *Lizzie* as she was known was born in Sunderland on the 22nd February 1901 and her maiden name was Howes. In the picture taken at the zoo in 1950 Lizzie is seen with her elder brother Robert Edward Howes. One of his daughters Laura Thorne lived in the Colchester area in the 1940's and 50's. Her husband remembers Lizzie living in a village called Birchanger or Birchington or maybe Betteshanger.

I appreciate all this was a long time ago, but any snippets of information are welcome. Thank you for taking time to read this, please contact me by Email at Penystone@aol.com or telephone 01226 766158
Grateful thanks, Mrs C Penistone

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Village Diary May/June 2008

May

24th At the Club 8.00 pm
Russell Crimes

25th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

25th At the Club
200 Club Draw

June

1st St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

7th At the Club 8.00 pm
Mathew Winchester

8th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

15th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service

22nd St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

28th At the Club 8.00 pm
Too Hot Group

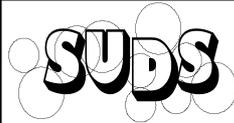
29th St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

29th At the Club
200 Club Draw

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Plant Sale - 24th May 2008 at 10.30am

As usual, bedding, perennial and vegetable plants will be available at 4 Harrisons. Tea in the garden (weather permitting). Hanging baskets filled to order.

Organic vegetables for sale

The children have started their own allotments in the school garden. Their aim is to grow fresh organic vegetables which they hope to sell once the allotments are established. Caretaker Gary dug over the ground which gave everyone a head start, and then it was all systems go. Watch this space for special offers!

Published on behalf of the people of Birchanger, and distributed free to each household in Birchanger. The views expressed herein do not automatically reflect those of the Editor or any of the organisations or institutions represented. Editorial team: Eddie Gilbey (816171), eddieb.gilbey54@virgin.net Elizabeth Godwin, Ken Wheatley, Michael Daw Submissions are welcome but may be edited depending on available space.