

Birchanger

April 2010



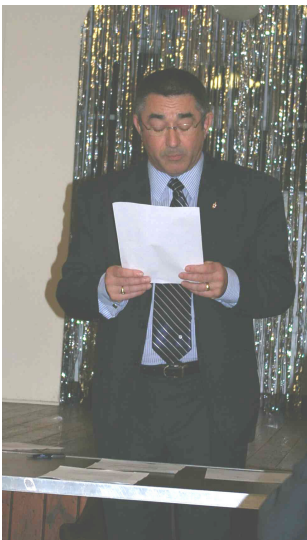
Magazine

Issue 88

THE VILLAGERS MEET

Nineteen villagers attended the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Church hall on March 31st.

After the preliminary welcome and reading of last year's minutes Chairman Phillip Hoy gave his report, which bore some similarities to last year's report. In short little has changed except for the improved road surface at the Southern end of the village and increased numbers of houses being occupied at the Forest hall housing estate. My Hoy also announced that he would be stepping down from the Chairman's role in June.



**Phillip Hoy
gives his report**

We have a new head teacher at our School and Shirley Warbrick gave a seven minute speech introducing herself to the meeting. It seems Shirley is keen on gardening and appealed for 3 tons of manure to put on the school's potatoes. One interesting fact that emerged was that only 33% of the pupils at Birchanger School are in fact village residents indeed some 45% actually live in Stansted!

In November 2006 our parish plan was unveiled and four years down the line there is a need to update it. To that end Maria Davy gave a short presentation and informed the meeting that the "Action Plan" would be up-dated as some of the actions listed in the original document, such as the building of the bus shelter, had been fulfilled.

This was followed by Elizabeth Godwin explaining the Local Development Framework which you should all have received forms to fill in about by now.

It now fell to PCSO Kelly Roberts to give an up-date on the crime statistics locally. Apparently we (Uttlesford) have the lowest crime levels in Essex and considering most of the local crimes occur at the motorway service area is very encouraging.

There was a general decrease in the levels of all reported crimes in our area. A question and answer session followed and it became clear that a number of telephone scams are going on. So if you receive an unsolicited phone call about :- winning a fortune on the Spanish lottery, or from a household alarm company that claims to have a direct line to the Flying Squad or a

credit card company claiming to want to give you money. Then that caller is a crook! So do not tell them anything about you, your home, or your bank details. Just hang up!

The meeting then took its regular vote opposing airport expansion and the territorial concerns between Birchanger and our neighbours.

There being little other pressing business the meeting closed at 9.20 for refreshments served by Sheila Devereaux.

Skip Dates

There have been some changes to the usual pattern as on two occasions there will be pm visits only.

The dates for 2010 are,

16 th May	12.30-4 pm
22 nd August	8am-11.30am
31 st October	12.30-4pm



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

A Successful Quiz Night

Unfortunately providing this magazine costs money. All the contributors come for free but the printing, although secured for an excellent price is still costly on a very limited income. The magazine team are determined to keep on producing the magazine every month and are very grateful for all the donations they receive. They do have to provide for a large proportion of the funding themselves.

So another very successful Music Quiz took place last month in the village hall. Jayne Devine wrote the rather tantalizing questions, husband Ken with Mark and Tina Crossley provided and worked the technology, Ed and Sue Gilbey provided the food and happily the village supplied the quiz teams.

It was a very successful evening ending with everyone singing or doing their own versions of the most popular songs. There will be a further event in the summer, the question is, what? Watch this space.

Yet Another Consultation. Do We Want a Mayor?

Not our idea, the government says we must consult so we have to do it. Some consultations may be hard to understand and this one could fit into that category. One of the things which the government is keen to promote is the cabinet structure for all local councils and county councils. In fact all councils over a government dictated size have to have the so called cabinet structure. Essex County Council has it, Uttlesford is still too small for it to be compulsory at present and does not have the cabinet structure.

Basically the current committee structure means that every member sits on two committees and is part of the decision making process of that committee. Under the cabinet structure five or so members are part of a cabinet representing the former committees under either a leader or an elected mayor. All decisions are taken by the cabinet and the only part the ordinary members play in the decisions other than in Development Control and Licensing are possibly in full council meetings, in working groups or by a scrutiny process.

The only committees not part of this process would be Development Control and Licensing. There would also be small groups and panels which would make recommendations to the cabinet. The elected mayor option works better in larger towns with close communities, while the leader who is appointed by the political party in power, seems to be more appropriate in rural situations.

This has been considered before, and previous decisions have to be reviewed. The feeling last time was against the cabinet system as both members and interested members of the public felt that the majority of councillors would be

disenfranchised along with those they represent. The Question is, do we want a cabinet and a Leader, a cabinet with an elected Mayor, or to stay as we are?

Things have moved on since then and there are ways round this disenfranchisement it appears. Some members will be visiting comparable nearby councils where the system is already in place to find out the advantages and disadvantages for themselves.

The public will be consulted and the pros and cons put to the district. The committee system alternative will still be on offer. The process will take some months and would not be put in place until after the elections in 2011.

Time to Apply For a Community Project Grant.

Uttlesford District Council's Community Grant Scheme is inviting bids for grants for projects which must be completed by March 2011.

The scheme is open to groups who are working to benefit the community such as Village Hall Committees, Parish Councils, Children's and Recreational Groups. The money may be used for small projects such as the purchase of vital equipment, to improve play areas or facilities and for small building works. The entries must be in by the third week in May. For grants over £1000 the applicant must fund 50% of the cost of the project.

To find out more, or to check your eligibility for a grant, contact Sue Hayden at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510563.

Uttlesford Community Achievement Awards Are Back.

After a break of nearly two years the District Council is again to honour those who have served their community in voluntary work for at least five years. Nominees can be any age but must live and do their voluntary unpaid work within the Uttlesford District. Those who work for the council are not eligible.

As usual there are five categories.

- A. Service to Children and Young People.
- B. Service to the Elderly.
- C. Service to People with Disabilities.
- D. Service to the Community and the Environment.
- E. Youth Initiatives which is a nomination for a young person aged between 15 and 18 who has contributed significantly to their local community.

I have forms available for nominations and am happy to assist with questions on eligibility and process on 812793.

UDC Offer Land Searches On Line.

Uttlesford District Council has acquired some new state of the Art software which now means that the council is able to offer land searches on line. Anyone needing to make land searches can simply log on and follow the instructions to have a speedy search of the land registry in far less time than normal.

To find out more contact Val Rogacs on 01799 510418 Or log on to vrogacs@uttlesford.gov.uk

How the Dog Warden Can Help.

People may have mixed views on the role of the local dog warden. Basically the aim of the warden is to help the community manage dogs sensibly and to help all dog owners.

Apart from dispensing advice on making sure your dog is well trained, regularly wormed and that all dog waste is bagged up immediately (it is an offence not to do this) the warden can also be a help to both dog owners and the community alike. The attitude to dog bins is very mixed in Birchanger, as nobody wants one sited near their home but dog waste may be disposed of in the black bin.

The warden can arrange to microchip your dog for you in your own home. All you need to do is to call to arrange an appointment. On the rare occasions when dog owners find themselves unable to cope with their dog, the first port of call should be the dog warden who will be able to help to find the dog a new home. There is no need simply to abandon the dog.

If you do find a stray dog which you cannot return to its owner, please call the warden between 8.30 am and 4pm on week days. Unfortunately the warden is unable to collect dogs which are running loose and are unable to be contained. When the dog is collected it will be taken to a kennel where it will be kept for 7 days before arrangements are made for it to be rehomed. The dog will be returned with a micro chip if it does not already have one, and boarding fees will be charged.

Out of Hours stray dogs are dealt with by Mercer and Hughes in Saffron Walden only, but before the dog is taken there, the practise must be phoned first to make sure someone is there to receive the dog.

If your dog does go missing, the loss can be reported to the dog warden who may be able to assist in its recovery.

Sue Knight is the UDC Animal Warden and she can be reached on 01799 510594. Mercer and Hughes can be contacted on 01799 522082. To find out more about the animal warden service and dog control please log on to www.uttlesford.gov.uk.

Peace of Mind For Working Mothers.

In these tough economic times more are finding themselves going back to work before perhaps they really wanted to. Others are scheduled to return but child care remains a problem.

Everyone wants to be confident that the childcare they arrange is safe and that their children are receiving the highest level of care possible. Sometimes it is better to choose a home environment instead of a nursery for the child.

This is where the National Child Minding Association can help. Their child carers, who register with the association are professional. They have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and are regularly inspected by OFSTED. They experience care in a home where the child minder will provide the activities which would be expected from a parent, along with care which can last through school years

as well. Child Minders quickly get to know the child's likes and dislikes and that the child experiences activities such as story telling and reading, play with children of different ages, shopping and all the many things which are typical in a normal home life.

The child minder will not mind if you visit her at home several times before making your decision. You will be able to bring your partner or a friend with you and will be able to ask all the questions you want. You will also be able to check up on necessary insurances and ask questions about the proposed daily routine. In short you will be able to have plenty of time to get to know the child minder and assess their suitability.

The Families Information Service in Essex has lists of local child minders and whether they have places available. They can be telephoned on 01245 438585.

Perhaps you are considering becoming a child minder. There are now diplomas which can be worked for in easy stages which lead to a professional qualification either by a distance learning course or at local classes. To find out more call 0800 169 4486.

Watch Out Burglars Are About!!

After a period when burglaries in the village were low, it seems that they have been let out again as they have been back with a vengeance in recent weeks.

Mainly it seems they are after cash, small items of jewellery and your car keys, so ultimately your car. It is amazing just how often people leave these in hall tables and drawers ready for the burglars to help themselves. Sadly they have been only too successful.

This new lot have been taught their art well. They are very good at entering new double glazed doors. It is not enough just to lift the handle to lock the door, they key must be turned as well when you lock up for the night. One property was discovered by the forensic team to have been entered no less than five times. Presumably while the occupants were asleep in bed.

They can be discouraged. Hide your keys and handbags where a night time intruder is unlikely to find them. Keep your cash and jewellery well hidden. Report anything suspicious at anytime either through the duty number 07801 461666 or a 999 call.

As if to prove the point

There was an attempted break in in Birchwood on the night of 4th/5th April

Parish Council Vacancy

Following the retirement of Parish Council Chairman Peter Hoy from the Parish Council earlier this month, there is now a vacancy on the Parish Council.

If you would like to stand for the council or would like further information on the role of Parish Councillor please call our Parish Clerk Julia Peachey on 503912 or Elizabeth Godwin on 812793.

School News

The last term of the school year has begun. There is a great deal to look forward to, including the school visit to London for Years 5 and 6, big preparations for St George's Day and in May the SATS tests for all pupils in Year 6.

At least the weather should be kinder and the traumas of the snow induced closures will be forgotten. Mrs Warbrick has many plans to enhance the school and it is hoped that these will be progressed this term. A new teacher is to be appointed for Class 2 and work has started to renovate the school garden.

My Hippiastrum is bigger than yours

An interest in horticulture is being fostered in the school. Class 1 have been investigating the best growing mediums with differing conditions and planting mediums. The results clearly demonstrated that plants need light, water, and the right growing material. Their beans are to be planted in the school garden. Alongside this all the classes chose a Hippiastrum bulb last term. The office staff and Head Teacher were included in this. The shoots were regularly measured and the heights entered into a chart. The winner may have grown the tallest plant, but the flowers were very beautiful and everyone rated the bulb they had chosen as the best whatever the height.

Literacy Fridays

By now everyone in school knows that Friday is the morning to concentrate on Literacy. The Big Writing Scheme is becoming firmly established in the school and the benefits it brings are starting to show. On average the children's work is more detailed and much longer as their confidence in their own ability to write is growing. The mornings concentrate on vocabulary, openers, connectives and punctuation, but after break the children come into a class room of classical music such as Mozart, a lighted candle and spend the next period on extended writing. This initiative is one of the best in the last few years and it is working. Perhaps there is a lesson for us all in this.

Opportunities for talented children

There is always concern in every school that every child is given all the opportunities possible to develop according to their own ability. There is a lot of pressure to look after the less able and to keep up in the league tables and concerns are raised that in all of this that the more able children are left to fend for themselves. Differentiation in teaching is very important in all schools including Birchanger. Birchanger takes every opportunity available to stimulate and interest all children and to participate in initiatives as they arise. The more able in Science from

years 5 and 6 took part in a day for children who are also more gifted in science, with children from other schools at Pearse House last month. The activities ranged around a competition between the schools and the children were set scientific challenges which they had to work out for themselves, after their initial briefing. The subjects included the aerodynamics of flight, rockets and the construction of ramps. Not the usual material for 9-11 year olds. Physics usually appears later in the school curriculum but the team from Birchanger took it all in their stride as they came second in the competition.

The School ran for Sport Relief

All the children took part in the Sport Relief Mile, including the children from the Nursery. Eight times around the school field perimeter is the equivalent of a mile and the children all did their best according to their age to achieve this. Many of the older children helped the youngest around the track ensuring they participated to the very best of their ability. Prizes were awarded, not just for completing the mile but for achieving their own personal best and a total of £120 was raised.

Last day fun

Everyone looks forward to the last day of term. For the staff it is a chance for a well earned break and a catch up with the rest of their life, for the children it is a break from routine and a chance to hang out with friends. This time all the children were asked to bring a hardboiled egg to school which they had decorated themselves, to enter into the Best Decorated Egg Competition. The very difficult task of judging the best egg in each year group fell to Mrs Warbrick. Later there was an Easter Egg Hunt followed by Egg and Spoon races for everyone. At the Friday Assembly the children entertained with string instruments and the first performance featuring the new ukuleles. Everyone had bought tickets for the Easter Hampers which were raffled at the Sharing Assembly and three lucky winners went home with hampers full of Easter treats.

Do You Need A Babysitter?

My name is Laura, I am nearly 17 and I am responsible, mature and very child-friendly.

I live locally in Birchanger Village with my parents and am currently studying for my A-Levels – hence the need to supplement my allowance!

£5-00 per hour

Please call 01279 814 723

Can give character references if required

World Challenge

DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

Enterprising Birchanger schoolboy, Guy Robins, has started up a small business delivering wild bird food and feeders to the doors of Birchanger residents to help him raise money to get to Morocco to help underprivileged children.

Fifteen-year-old Guy is participating in the World Challenge, and educational experience of a lifetime. The first phase of the challenge is to raise the £1,400 cost of the trip by himself. Once in Morocco in July 2011, he and the other World Challenge students will get used to the culture and make preparations for the rest of their challenge, including buying food and supplies they will need for their trek. Guy will be climbing North Africa's highest mountain, Mt. Toubkal, passing through rural communities and villages on the way.

The students will have the opportunity of seeing and participating in a way of life far removed from their own when they undertake the project aspect of their visit. They will help with community renovation work and teach in rural schools over a 4-day period.

Guy hit upon the idea of selling bird food and delivering it directly to the doorstep, to raise funds, when he realised how heavy and bulky his Grandma found it to bring home from the shops.

Guy can supply to Birchanger residents a good selection of high quality wild bird foods such as seed mix, peanuts, sunflower hearts, fat balls, niger seed and meal worms together with feeders. If you would like to receive a price list please contact Guy by either phone on 812248 or email robinsbirdfood@hotmail.com.



Guy seen with some of his stock

Back by Popular Demand

The Birchanger Art Exhibition is set to return this Autumn and with it another opportunity to win the now famous "Turnip Prize". It is not only an opportunity to create something truly unique for yourself, but is also an opportunity to see the work of local artists and to buy their work. Refreshments will be on offer throughout the weekend and you will also be able to view the work of other "Turnip" participants.

That will not be all. It is also planned to hold a photographic exhibition in the Church which will be open and decorated for the occasion.

The Exhibition will run over the weekend of September 4th/5th from 10.30 to 5pm in the Church Hall. If you would like to find out more or to enter an exhibit in either the exhibition itself or for the Turnip Prize please contact Heather Brown on 815453.

Celebrate the Last Night of the Proms With a Flutter?

This is certainly a first for Birchanger. In fact it is two treats for the price of one. The same team who host the now famous Burns Night is planning a last night at the proms with a difference. You can forget Proms in the Park and spending the night on a chill chair watching a concert about quarter of a mile away and enjoy the fun very near to home.

In Birchanger you will be able to enjoy a classic Race Night with all the trimmings, enjoy a Fish and Chips or Chicken and Chips supper then join in with the second half of the Last Night of the Proms before staggering home after a final flutter. There will be a bar, a tote, and a big screen. A night not to be missed. For details of tickets watch this space.

The last Night of the Proms is on September 11th in the Church Hall.

Sally Dines In The Dark

Dans, le noir is a restaurant in London that provides a unique social and sensory experience. I first heard about this restaurant when guiding in Paris. Some members of the group requested a visit to the one in Paris, but unfortunately it was fully booked.

Dining at Dans Le Noir is a whole new experience that challenges our pre conceptions. The disabled become abled and vice versa. In the dark the blind person becomes your eyes.

I entered the restaurant to see a small bar a cosy area of sofas and a block of lockers. The reception staff welcomed me and explained that coats and bags and particularly mobile phones and articles that could give out a light be locked in the lockers. You kept the key

The next step was to brief you on what was going to happen and choose from the menu.

The choice of menu were as follows, A meat B Fish C vegetarian D surprise. They were all at fixed prices and I chose an all inclusive of a cocktail, two glasses of wine and the three course surprise meal. I was given my cocktail there was a non alcoholic option.

Then I went behind a curtain up a dimly lit corridor to my waiter Roberto who was ready to guide me to my table. I placed my hand on his shoulder and walked behind him. He said there were no steps and finally he stopped and placed my hand on the back of the chair I was to sit on.

I sat down and spoke to a couple at the right side of me. Kate and her partner opposite. They had chosen to try a wine tasting in the dark and were not eating.

Roberto brought me a glass of wine and placed it in my left hand. He then brought a bottle of water and a glass. After a few minutes chatting I picked up the bottle to remove the top. It was only after a few attempts I realised that there was no top. I felt a bit silly but Kate laughed.

My starter came and I felt the edge of the plate, a small square. I cheated and ran my fingers lightly over the contents. I could feel lettuce, rolls of ham and what seemed like peanuts. Strange.

I tried to eat with my knife and fork and quite a number of times I found that I had in fact either dropped my food or not picked it up. Kate and David were in stitches at my comments. We kept thinking that any minute our eyes would adjust to the darkness and we would be able to see shapes or patches of light. But no.

Roberto took away my plate and brought my main course. Again it was on a larger square plate and once again I ran my fingers over it first. I felt mashed potato, pea pods (Mange tout) I bent down to smell the food and decided it was a fish, but also there was something on the plate I could not whole heartedly guess at. My guess was a piece of meat, very tender probably beef

My wine was going down a treat and Kate was now giggly. David was a fireman and used to going into the

dark to rescue people.

We now started to describe each other to see if we were as we described when seeing each other outside the dark room

I told Kate my height and she was slightly smaller. She put her hand on my shoulder and felt that I had long hair. I told her it was blonde.

She had shoulder length hair and I guessed that she was dark. It was strange I did not want to be rude but I thought that David would have receding hair or very short hair and of course muscular (the fireman bit).

My dessert came up and I detected that it was a cold rice pudding and small chocolate cups placed around it. We joked and I asked Kate to be kind if when we got out into the light, I had the evidence of my dinner down my front.

Roberto explained that he was sorry but they were not allowed to serve hot tea or coffee but that we could retire to the bar area where we could either have more drinks or beverages and chat to our newly formed dining companions

Kate was how I had thought but I was not able to picture her actual facial features without touching her face. David was how I thought he would be, slightly shorter and stockier

We all talked and the receptionist who had taken our orders came over to talk about our experiences.

Kate and David were not impressed with their wine tasting and tapas, mainly because they could only say if a wine was white red or rose.

I was glad that I had tried the experience but had to confess that I was glad to come out after a couple of hours. To have to live your entire life in the dark must be so frightening..

I truly admire all those people that I guide on the holidays etc because they have accepted that there is nothing they can do except live their life the best that they can. I have made some wonderful friends and it truly does make you appreciate how fortunate we all are

Good home needed for Piano

I have a lonely Saffell upright piano that needs some TLC in a friendly environment. Good condition but needs tuning.

Dimensions:

1.32m long / 1.2m high / 0.54m deep

Free to anybody who can collect

Bob Jennings

home : 01279 814083

mobile : 07880 916375

Pop goes the Mag

If you were kept awake by raucous singing at an indecent hour on the night of Saturday 20th March it might have been because the Mag ran the second of its popular music quizzes on that date to raise funds.

Team members from across the civilised world, and Scotland, met in the Church hall to do battle in a contest which brought together convivial musical entertainment, a gentle taxing of the little grey cells, some exercising of the vocal chords and a fair amount of paté and cheese.

Eight teams fought it out over eight rounds of sometimes downright silly questions designed to sort out the hit men (and women) from the choir boys (and girls, of course) and, as MC for the evening, I can tell you that maximum effort was exerted (apart from John McArthur got the Irish national anthem wrong) - there was pride at stake here!

The quiz was a great success raising £500 to help keep us going (issues don't print themselves y' know) and congratulations go to the winning team who dedicated their victory to the hope of finding a negotiated settlement that will stop dogs pooing on the track leading from the club to Spider Cottage, nice thought people

To the victors go the plaudits, and rightly so, but

putting on an event like this requires a whole team of people, not just the devastatingly ruggedly handsome guy with the mic, so please be upstanding and raise your glasses to:

Tina 'Vorderman' Crossley for keeping tally of the scores, Jayne 'WD' Devine for making sure the whole event ran smoothly, Ken 'Slim Boy Slimmer' Devine for spinning the wheels, Ed 'Jamie' Gilbey & Sue 'Nigella' Gilbey for the food prep, Pim 'I know that one' Godwin, Liz 'Para' Godwin & Maria '2 docs' Davy for scoring

Special thanks must also go to Dave Green for supplying the PA system, Phil Fortune for giving us a lend of his projector (I never doubted you mate!!), Stansted school for letting us use a screen and Maria Davy (again) for the use of a lap top (although giving us the password would also have helped)

Thanks also to Laura and Rebecca for helping on the night

In closing, I would like to think we were successful in providing a good night out with some laughs and a sing-song We will be trying to do more events, in future Keep an eye on these pages for more information.

MC

May Entertainment At The Club

Saturday 1st
Saturday 15th
Friday 28th to
Sunday 30th

Red and Black
Casino Night

Friday 28th
Saturday 29th

Beer Festival Weekend
BBQ & Acoustic Night
Open Day
Hit n Run

All at various times

SPRING COFFEE MORNING



In aid of Church funds

Tuesday 11th May
10.30 till Noon

Moorswood 330 Birchanger Lane

Everyone welcome



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.gilbey@btinternet.com Elizabeth Godwin, Ken Wheatley, Michael Daw Submissions are welcome but may be edited depending on available space.

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Village Diary April/May 2010

April

24th 8.00 pm At the Club
Cockney night with
Gordon Bennett

25th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

30th 8.00 pm At the Club
Poker Night

May

1st 8.00 pm At the Club
Red and Black

2nd 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

9th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

15th 8.00 pm At the Club
Casino Night

16th 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service

23rd 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

28th/30th At the Club
Beer festival weekend

28th At the Club
BBQ & Acoustic night

29th At the club All Day
Open Day
8.00 pm Hit n Run

30th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

D Bonney & Sons



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Local Councillor Contact details

Julia Peachey (Clerk to Parish Council)	01279 503912	juliapeachey1@yahoo.com
Elizabeth Godwin District Councillor	01279-812793	stickgo@aol.com
Ray Gooding County Councillor	01279-813103	Cllr.Ray.Gooding@essexcc.gov.uk
Maria Davy	01279-816490	mdavypa@btinternet.com
Jayne Devine	01279- 814723	gingerthecat@tesco.net
David Holder	01279 -813393	davidholder3@talktalk.net
Pam Lee	01279-815938	pam.mark2@tiscali.co.uk
Linda Pocklington	01279-812246	Not on e-mail
Ken Wheatley	01279-814678	ken@birchanger.com