

Birchanger

February 2011



Magazine

Issue 98

A NEW PATHWAY IN THE WOOD

The brand new path in Birchanger Wood was officially opened last month attended by about 200 supporters, and their families, including a large canine turnout. Well they do have a vested interest as well: so much so that a passing member of the feline species was chased unceremoniously up a tree to remain there until everyone had gone home.

In time honoured fashion the green ribbon was cut, the path which extends to the rear of the Focus store was duly walked, and everyone returned to a very welcome mug of soup.

The path is only part completed and active fund raising will continue in the hope that the two final sections of the path will be completed next year.

The path is 1400m long and 2m wide, and is the first access path of further proposed footpaths to circumvent the Wood. It cost £50,000 and was funded by an 80% grant from the Forestry Commission with the balance kindly given from Trust Funds, Local Councils, BAA and private donations, and was constructed by a local contractor based in Stansted.

It will enable all year use of the wood, is wheelchair friendly, and by keeping wandering feet to the path will enable the under growing English bluebells and wood anemone to regenerate.



Christine Walkden opens the pathway with the Chairman of Birchanger Wood Trust, and woodland worker Pat Forrest.

AN ODE TO BIRCHANGER WOOD

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW FOOTPATH
BY CHRISTINE WALKDEN ON SATURDAY, 15th JANUARY 2011

Walkers and runners who set a good pace
Find Birchanger Wood a real fabulous place
Trees all around and the birds in there too
Just listen and look is all you need do.

The wild flowers are there to be seen in the Spring
And bright smiles of delight they always do bring.
The wonderful new footpath with such easy access
Has proved to us all a resounding success.

Children in buggies being pushed by their mums
Disabled in wheelchairs who are out with their chums
And youngsters on pushbikes a safe place to ride
The new path in the wood is the source of their pride.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Trees with a tree preservation order

Tree preservation orders have been issued by both Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council in the past. From the end of last year Essex County Council are no longer responsible for any tree preservation orders, as that function has now been taken over by the District Council. The tree preservation orders issued originally by the District have not been revoked. New Tree Protection Orders by Uttlesford District Council to cover trees which were formerly under orders issued by Essex County Council have been put in place now where appropriate.

The problem is that most of the planning officers at UDC were unaware of their new responsibilities, as there had been no liaison with them from Essex County Council it seems. The confusion was enhanced by the letters sent out to the few remaining properties with TPOs covered by the county where it appeared that the owners of these properties had every right to hack down these trees as they wished. Unfortunately for them this is not so.

It has all been very confusing and inappropriately handled. If you do have a TPO issued by ECC as opposed to the District Council and have been somewhat baffled by all this please call the UDC's tree officer, Ben Smeeden, on 01799 510 466.

Possible new Stansted Surgery plans unveiled

At long last the plans for the possible new surgery in the centre of Stansted have been unveiled. The proposed site is at the TVR Garage in Lower Street, and the surgery will not stand alone, but will have an upper floor of flats, with shops or office units at a lower level.

Some parking will be provided, and there will be some loss of the Council Car Parking space.

It is by no means certain yet that this will be the final site. The Rochfords option remains open as the PCT must use the money set aside for the surgery before the PCTs are disbanded in 2013.

Whichever option you favour, one site must be developed soon.

Affordable Housing in Uttlesford

Affordable housing for younger families is badly needed across the district. This year Uttlesford's target was met across the district as 726 new lower cost homes were

built overall. Several on the new so called airport related sites.

Affordable homes are badly needed in Birchanger village itself. There were several built at Forest Hall but homes are required in a small number in the village itself. Any ideas where these might go within our development limits?

Brace yourself Birchanger

The Birchanger School PTA are staging the first ever 10 kilometre run in the village. Everyone of whatever age is invited to take part in the run which will start from 10 am on Sunday May 8th. There will be more details later but the course will be in two five kilometre laps and it can be taken at a walking pace if running is not an option. There will be some inconvenience for around four hours to some road users, but the project has the go ahead from the police and the inconvenience is expected to be minor.

It is open to everyone who would like to have a go to enter and there will be refreshments available. There will also be a need for volunteers to act as marshals along the route. Watch this space for further details, but start your fitness programme now!

Where can I get a backward facing buggy?

With all the pundits telling us that we need to communicate more with our toddlers and babies I set off to find a backwards facing buggy for my baby great grandson. Apparently outward facing buggies are one of the reasons why children are entering primary schools with below average communication skills. Not my great grandson I thought.

Well that is if you can find such an item. They exist but only for the youngest babies: after this it seems the baby must face the world. Some of the selection of buggies on offer were slung so low, the baby would end up at boot level. No wonder they can't communicate. All they see are feet not faces. So it seems just when your baby gets around to being able to understand what you are saying, he has to face outwards into a largely uncommunicative world. How about the manufacturers? Surely they are missing a trick here?

I wandered into a very exclusive shop in London's west end. I thought I had found exactly what I was looking for. There it was. Metal frame, none of that nasty plastic, facing backwards, not too low, good removable waterproof cover, mattress a bit hard, but that could be remedied; price was steep but it is not everyone who gets to be a great grandparent. Then I read the label "dog buggy". Now how are dogs communicating skills?

UDC pulls the plug on septic tanks

It seems that there are a lot of local firms in the septic tank emptying business these days. In fact there are so many that it is no longer cost effective for the District council to continue to provide this service. This will only affect a few people in Birchanger but throughout the district there are many who regret the loss of the service. The operators were always willing to go down the longest lanes and always came with the right size of vehicle and pipes for the particular job. If you are affected and live in an awkward to reach house please tell your new contractor when arranging a visit if your house has any particular needs.

New rail consultation

The consultation on rail services as supplied now by National Express may have gone unnoticed by many. The main issues were speeding up the Stansted Express at the expense of services to Hertford, as well as reducing the stops at Stansted Mountfitchet, Newport and Elsenham in order to provide a faster service to Cambridge by just a few minutes in either case. Reducing the service at stops between here and Cambridge may benefit the residents of Cambridge, but there are a great many people who commute from all the smaller stations and this move is not finding support among the travelling public of Newport and Elsenham.

We await the results, but it is hoped that National Express will listen to the concerns and not do what they may have already privately decided! Unfortunately the one thing that everyone wants, later trains at night was not included as an option. The point has been raised.

Watch out, the burglars are still about

Beavering away throughout Essex and Herts it seems, they are opportunistic by day and ingenious at night. By day they look like credible workmen. They carry away small amounts of items, mainly cash or jewellery in knapsacks. By night they pick locks in the middle of the night and steal handbags which have been left downstairs. Make sure your doors are firmly bolted, and keep cash and other valuables upstairs. We can beat this lot!

Old toys wanted

Please don't throw away those toys your under fives no longer use. The new Birchanger Baby and Toddler Group would like them please.

They can be dropped off at the Church Hall on Fridays between 1.30 and 3pm or otherwise please call me on 812793 when a more convenient time can be arranged.

Fete plans are go!

Planning for Birchanger Fete is well under way, but there are still a great many opportunities for you to become involved.

There will be several stalls run by the fete committee but there are still opportunities for village groups or individuals to sell their own wares for themselves or their organisations.

It may well be that your organisation already has plans, but for others and those who are perhaps craft makers of a variety of sorts, now is the time to use and display your skills to a wider audience and perhaps make some money as well.

It costs a mere £10 to have a stall at the fete. After that everything you make is quite literally your own. Worth a try? Call me on 812793 or Peter Booker on 813012.

More helpers are also wanted for set up and to man a stall. It is a fun way of meeting people. Please call us if you can help or would like a stall of your own.

Entry to the fete will be free for everyone. The club is holding both an Open Day and a Beer Festival on the fete day as well as a very special evening entertainment. September 3rd is definitely a date for your diary! On this day you don't have to be a member to buy drinks at the club bar. Plenty of entertainment is planned for all generations, there will be a Hog Roast and refreshments will be available throughout the day.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

WEDNESDAY MARCH 30TH
AT 8.00 PM

St Mary's Church Hall

Everyone is welcome

SPRING COFFEE MORNING



In aid of Church funds

Tuesday 8th March
10.30 till Noon

Moorswood 330 Birchanger Lane

Everyone welcome



What's that on the radio?

One day late last month, I was contacted by Philip Jay of Gulf Radio Services asking for an interview. It transpired that Gulf Radio is a service for ex patriots living in the Persian gulf. They supply a "Radio 2" type service with music and magazine format programmes to Qatar. They found the Birchanger website, got in contact and hey presto!

Any way Mr Jay and his partner Pam Worth, both very nice people, arrived at my door on January 17th and conducted a 40 minute interview.

Most of our discussion was not recorded but eventually he switched on his digital recorder and asked some fairly routine questions about Birchanger and what goes on here. Thinking he wanted to know a bit about the history of the place, I had done some preparation, checking out dates and the names of prominent villagers etc.

But the questions were more along the lines of "What is the social life of the village? Is there a pub? What are the other villagers like? So I managed to get a good plug in for the Club and Pub and the open gardens committee but sadly they did not seem to want to know about the Church or the school. No mention of the Airport or the effect of the motorway. There was some discussion about the encroachment of Bishops Stortford and Stansted.

A little more research would have given them a better range of questions and forearming me would have resulted in more reasoned replies.

They have sent me a CD of the final programme and I don't come across too badly, except I failed to name anyone else in the village, they edited out most of the "Erms and ahs".

Ed

Burns Night Birchanger style

There cannot be many small villages which have, for the past four years, put on the best Burns Night. At least that was what the piper called it after he had piped in the Haggis in true Scottish style at this year's Burns Night in the church Hall.

The event, run by SSE with a big Birchanger input, has been a sell out for the past four years. Somehow the fun and ritual of the evening has been maintained and participants enjoy a traditional Burns Night in the Birchanger way.

The band played, the piper and drummer brought in the Haggis which was duly dispatched in the time honoured Burns Night manner and was enjoyed by all. There were the traditional toasts, a quiz for each table to do, should they have the time, and then a whole range of impromptu speakers with after dinner jokes.

Burns Night does not just materialise, there is a lot of hard work and help put into the event by a great many people. Will it be back? Watch this space. To make it happen it needs practical help from you!



Forest Hall deliveries

Sadly for everyone living on the Forest Park Estate, we regret this is the last Birchanger Village Magazine which we will be able to deliver to you. Our costs have been rising in recent months and it is understood that most of you are also in receipt of the Stansted publications. If you have enjoyed reading our publication the magazine will still be available at the Church, School, Club, Pub and online should you wish to see a copy. Thank you for reading Birchanger Village Magazine.

School News

With half term soon to be over it seems that the New Year is already rushing by. The children returned to school to find a new enclosed porch area nearly completed. It makes a welcome space to wait for the doors to be opened, read the notice board and pick up an informative leaflet. It also makes a much warmer environment for those working in the front offices.

They also had to get used to their new class identities. Instead of Class 1 we have Ladybirds, Class 2 Hedgehogs, Class 3 Squirrels and Class 4 Owls. As always the children caught on faster.

Wild life area refurbished

Despite bitterly cold weather a team led by Mr Glogner managed to empty clear and reline the pond in the wildlife garden. It is now ready for the frogs to lay their spawn and maybe even to be visited again by ducks and moorhens. The Outdoor Learning Projects taking place this term are the learning Project for Ladybirds and Hedgehogs, Mission and Double Club in Owls and Eco Schools for Everyone.

School attendance target

The school now has an attendance policy of the minimum of 96% attendance. This means that to achieve this a child must have no more than 7 days off in a school year. The new policy will be rigorously enforced, but parents with real difficulties regarding annual holidays are asked to complete a holiday form and must have exceptional reasons why the holiday cannot be taken at the appropriate time. Schools throughout the country all have these new and very rigorous attendance policies.

It is not all bad news as the best attendees will be rewarded.

Looking ahead

It won't always be dark damp and cold. Summer will soon be here and with it an invitation to everyone to come to an afternoon of summer fun, when the school will have its annual

School Sports Day on Saturday July 9th at 1pm. This will be followed by the School Fete which is always a time when people can relax, enjoy the wide variety of refreshments on offer and visit the many and different stalls. This is not just an event for the school, everyone is invited.

School Website.

Don't forget you can find out more about the school by logging on to the new school website at www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk The site has a Twitter account which can be accessed by the menu on the website. Comments or suggestions are welcome.

Please Collect Vouchers for Birchanger School.

In the past Birchanger has supported the school by collecting Sainsbury's and Tesco's vouchers. These vouchers have been used to purchase a variety of much needed equipment. Birchanger has been very generous with its support as in most years equipment has been bought, through each scheme, totalling over £1000.

Please remember us when you are at the tills and ask for the vouchers. They can be handed in to the school or I am happy to receive them.

Parents Forum

The next Parents Forum will be at the School on Thursday March 10th at 9.00 am.

Birchanger Buddies is a Big Success

Over 35 babies and toddlers attended the first toddler group to be run in Birchanger for many years at the end of January. The afternoon was a huge success, everyone enjoyed it, any tears there were dried quickly as everyone was free to choose from the large amount of play equipment available, and to move around as they pleased. Mums, Dads and Grans were able to talk as their children played in safety.

It is hoped that everyone will make new friends and make Fridays at 1.30 pm a regular fixture in their diary.

The group is run under the auspices of Spangles Children's Centre in Stansted and uses equipment on loan from there. It is hoped that the group will be able to purchase equipment of its own, and is working with the Church Hall to establish suitable storage. The group is managed by a committee made up almost entirely of mothers with babies and young children so they are very focused on the children's needs.

However volunteers, whose children may well be long grown up are also needed to help the mothers and to arrange welcome cups of tea for all the adult visitors, with healthy snacks for the children. It could be just the job for someone who would like to meet more people and to do something incredibly vital at the same time.

If you would like to come and see what happens at the baby and toddler group please come to the Church Hall on Friday any time between 1.30 and 3pm. If you would like to discuss just what is involved as a helper before you come, please call Gemma on 07582 683140 We are hoping to be able to arrange a rota of helpers as soon as possible.

All pain and no gain

Some of us in Birchanger have had a pretty lousy winter. The weather this time is not the cause, the blame can be fairly and squarely laid at the door of the over large development at Churton.

Once a classic early Edwardian house stood there. It had fallen into some disrepair but nothing that could not have been deemed beyond fixing.

Unfortunately that was not the plan, and the three proposed houses became nine and there was nothing the Parish Council or the local member was allowed to do about it. The fact that this development was one of the ten cited in parliament in the successful attempt to get the law changed, does not help us now.

The immediate neighbours are suffering a winter of mud, blocked accesses, arguments and utter misery. The builders are not always prompt to move their cars. this is what leads to the inevitable arguments. Accesses are needed by horse owners, young families, the elderly and the farmer and they are all suffering. The verges on the lane are seemingly irretrievably moved back through erosion from the inevitable builders lorries.

The police will shift anything causing an obstruction but it takes time to do this. It is no way to have to live. If you are a builder and actually read this, please do your best to park considerately. Try not to cause obstructions. If you are a prospective purchaser of one of the properties, please try to ensure that the residents of the lane are not inconvenienced in any way by your parking. People around the site are having too much to put up with already.

In the meantime, sorry. I tried my best to stop this and it is no fun telling the planners " I told you so".

Elizabeth

A busy September in prospect

There are many important dates for your diary in prospect for September. First of all, just before the school year begins again there will be the Birchanger Village Fete at the Club on September 3rd. then the Birchanger Art Exhibition will be back for the third time and the second consecutive year at the Church Hall on September 25th and 26th, where the works of acclaimed local artists as well as those from further afield, will be on sale. There is also something louder than just a rumour, telling me that the last Night of the Proms will be returning as well. As ever, these events cannot happen without a lot of support, either by your patronage or your active participation. Please telephone me on 812793 for further details.

Council funded Insulation, ending soon

Uttlesford District Council backed energy efficiency scheme is going to close at the end of this March. So this is your last chance to take advantage of Council funded loft and cavity wall insulation at just **£49** or **FREE** (If in receipt of a qualifying means tested benefit).

Normally loft and cavity wall insulation could cost up to £250 per measure to be installed, but through HEEP Birchanger homeowners and private tenants can get their lofts and cavity walls insulated for just £49 per measure or for FREE.

Around half of the heat loss in a typical home is lost through un-insulated lofts and cavity walls.

By installing discounted insulation separately, loft insulation can **save you around £145** and cavity wall insulation around **£110 every year**.

Don't miss out, call HEEP free on 0800 980 6026 to speak to an energy advisor, who will be able to arrange a free no obligation survey for you.



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birchangerbuddies@gmail.com

Library van visit dates.

Fridays

Jan 7th, 21st, Feb, 4th, 18th, March 4th, 18th, April 1st, 15th,
29th, May 13th, 27th, June 10th, 24th,
Club, 15.50-16.15. High View, 16.20-16.35.

11.30-12.30

Jan 21st, Feb 18th, March 18th, April 15th, May 27th,
June 24th, July 22nd, August 19th, September 16th,
October 14th, November 11th, December 9th

Thank Goodness I do not need to use the railways on Sundays

Well at least not to go to Stansted Airport. We may be able to travel to Liverpool Street without any inconvenience, but those going in the opposite direction to Cambridge or hoping to catch a plane last month were in for a nasty shock.

At Liverpool Street there were no clear indications as all the trains were billed to go to Bishops Cleeve. A small fast travelling message occasionally popped up telling passengers to go to Bishops Cleeve and then get a bus, but to an overseas visitor this would not have been easily apparent. Having by some minor miracle got on the right train, at Bishops Cleeve a faint disembodied voice told passengers to cross the bridge and catch the coach if they wanted to get to the airport, presumably the Cambridge passengers had to make an inspired guess.

It was no small surprise to find confused tourists wandering about hopelessly lost and even returning to Liverpool Street on another train. Others at Liverpool Street had no idea how to get to the airport at all unless members of the public offered to explain and to help them. Is this really the way the country, who is about to host the Olympics should be treating its visitors? British Rail maybe doing much needed overhauls to the line before 2012 but we need to sharpen up our act and fast, or the much hoped for tourism boost will simply fail to happen through a lack of consideration which could have been so easily avoided.

Cocido of lamb with coriander

Cocido is the collective name for Spanish stews. While cocidos usually include dried chickpeas, this version uses canned. Serve it with a chunk of bread or boiled potatoes.

Ready in 60 to 70 minutes serves 4

2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
3tbsp oliveoil
500g/1lb 2oz boneless lamb leg steaks, cut

into cubes

1 red onion, thinly sliced
400g 14oz can chopped tomatoes
½ tsp paprika
1 tbsp tomato puree

400g 14oz can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
150g/5oz young spinach leaves, shredded generous
handful fresh coriander leaves, chopped

1 Sprinkle the garlic with a generous pinch of salt and use the flat side of a knife to work to a juicy paste. Mix the paste with 1 tbsp of the olive oil and smear the mixture all over the meat. Cover the meat and leave to marinate.

2 Meanwhile, fry the onion in the remaining oil in a large frying pan for about 6 mins, or until the onion is beginning to brown. Season with salt and pepper, turn down the heat and cook for a further 4 to 5 mins, then tip onto a plate.

3 Return the pan to a medium-high heat and quickly brown the meat in batches. Stir the onion into the meat and the tomatoes. Tip the stew into a heavy-based medium-sized saucepan. Half-fill the empty tomato can with water and add that to the pan, together with the paprika and tomato puree. Bring the stew to the boil, half-cover the pan and simmer steadily for 20 mins.

4 Add the chickpeas and taste for seasoning. Check that the meat is tender; if not, simmer for a further 10 mins or so. Freeze at this point, otherwise stir in the spinach and coriander and, when wilted, remove from the heat and serve.

PER SERVING 379 kcalories, protein 33g, carbohydrate 16g, fat 21 g, saturated fat 6g, fibre 5g, added sugar none, salt 0.92g



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Village Diary February/March

February

27th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

March

6th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

8th 10.30am Moorswood
Spring Coffee Morning

13th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

20th 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service

27th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

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