



Birchanger Village Magazine

April 2020

Issue 207



Annual Parish Council Report - By Angie Driscoll

The public annual Birchanger Parish Council meeting was held at the village church hall on Wednesday 18th March. Below is an abridged copy of my report for the year 2019/2020

Traveller update

The travellers arrived in July 2018 and an enforcement notice was served to them almost 16 months ago in November 2018 but the travellers appealed against this. The process for the appeal as I understand it is that an Inspector is appointed and a letter issued to all parties. This letter was received by UDC on February 24th this year. It also had to be decided whether the appeal should be made as a public enquiry or a hearing. The travellers requested a three day public enquiry but this appears to have been rejected and it is to be a one day hearing. The proposed date for this hearing is June 3rd but so far we have not been given an address for the venue.

New traffic light junction replacing roundabout

We were originally expecting the removal of the roundabout on the A120 to start last summer. However, the work was only put out to tender in the autumn of 2019 and it is reported that all tenders have been rejected due to high costs, so work is yet to start. We have been assured that mitigating measures will be taken to avoid Birchanger Lane becoming a worse rat run than it already is but so far we have no details.

Potholes

Over the last couple of years it has been difficult to miss the number of potholes on Birchanger Lane which have got bigger and deeper. These, of course have been reported on numerous occasions and over time, the number of road defects, which includes potholes, have increased from 59 in 2017 to 104 in February this year. The good news is that we've been informed that the potholes are to be repaired between March and June this year. Don't hold your breath though as bad weather and the coronavirus could hold this up!

Village Safety

The Parish Council often receives complaints about speeding traffic through the village. Last September another traffic survey was undertaken by Essex Highways but, yet again, Birchanger Lane did not meet the criteria for a 20 mph speed limit or the installation of VAS (vehicle activated signs). However, as the Parish Council have sufficient funds, Highways are validating the installation of wig-wags, which are signs that flash during school drop off and pick up times. We are also hoping to get 20 mph advisory signs put up. We hope that these measures will slow the traffic particularly around the school.

We also now have our own Community Speedwatch Group. Members of the group have received training on how to use the speed gun and have had several sessions on the lane checking vehicles speed. Whilst they can't actually issue speeding tickets a register is kept and sent to the police who follow up with any speeding drivers.

Last December we were lucky enough to get our own Community Special Constable - Martin Hall. Martin has had many years' experience as a Police Special and he is often seen (sometimes not) patrolling Birchanger, helping to keep our village safe. (By the way, he can and will issue speeding tickets, resulting in hefty fines).

Planning Applications

There are many villages near us that have countless numbers of planning applications for large numbers of houses to be built. Fortunately here in Birchanger we are surrounded by green belt and so far this has protected us. However, last year an application was made for 8 houses to be built on the edge of Birchanger, on green belt land presently occupied by two derelict barns. The Parish Council agrees with the District Council in that the green belt must be preserved, so we have of course objected. The application has now been amended to 6 houses but no decision has yet been made by Uttlesford Planning Department.

Other Business

No doubt our Council tax will increase again this year. However, I'm very pleased to report that as the Parish Council has sufficient funds, we are able to cut our precept this year by around 45%. Whether we are able to do this again next year depends of course on our expenditure but we thought it right to ask for less whilst we were in a position to do so.

Last but by no means least, I must thank Keith Williams, our parish clerk, and all the Parish Councillors for the time they devote to our village and the support they all give to me.

DO YOU NEED HELP DURING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK?

Please note that anyone in Birchanger who is at high risk and has no family or friends to help them with shopping, collecting medication, or any other special needs can contact me (the editor of this magazine) either by email: peter.sampson@talktalk.net or by phone 01279 813193. Alternatively you can call Elizabeth Godwin on 01279 812793.

We have contact with a number of local volunteers who are willing to help you with anything you need so please don't be shy or too proud to contact us. Your safety and privacy will be secure.

Kind Regards, Peter Sampson (Editor)



Editors Letter Box

Dear Readers,

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever that villagers take care of the elderly and more vulnerable amongst us. Many towns and villages are using social media to keep in touch and pass on information to each other. I would suggest you join the 'Birchanger Residents' Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/283147695598967/>. This is normally a closed group but you can make a request on the Facebook page to join it. The Parish Council also has a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/birchanger/> and a website: <https://www.birchanger.com> where notices may appear from time to time. More help and advice on the virus can be found on page 5 of this magazine under the 'Neighbourhood Watch' column. In the meantime, stay safe and well people! Please contact me if you are in need of help. *Best regards, Peter Sampson 01279 813193.*

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

Ethelwyn Dennison (Etta)

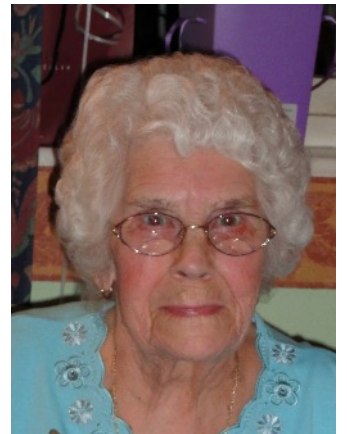
One of the oldest residents in Birchanger has sadly passed away at the age of 98 years.

Ethelwyn met her Birchanger born husband George in the Three Horseshoes pub, they went on to marry in December 1948 and had one son, Colin born in 1951.

After the marriage, Etta and George moved into a cottage in Birchanger Lane where Etta lived until July 2019, when sadly her health deteriorated and she moved into Hargrave House Care Home in Stansted. This didn't stop her enjoying life, as she joined in all the activities at the home.

She will be remembered for being a lovely kind lady by anyone who knew her and will be sadly missed.

Susan Dennison



Dear Ed,

Helping Hands

In last months issue I asked if you would donate dry goods and long shelf life items to help a neighbour in the village that might be struggling. I have received lots of support and people have been delivering food, cleaning goods etc. to my home. Thank you all for what you have given and for those who offered their support. Others have offered to help and you can now deliver donations to:

Shirley Ross at 351a Birchanger Lane
Christine and Nick Brazier at 1 Duck End
Pam Lee at 4 Harrisons

We need store cupboard items such as: Rice, pasta, flour, sugar, tinned vegetables, baked beans, long life milk, tinned fruit, tea, coffee, tinned meats, cereals, pulses, curry sauces/powders, toilet rolls, soap, washing powder and washing up liquid.

I have been asked to name the families that are receiving our help. Sorry, but I will not do this. Any information that I am given about a family will be kept strictly confidential and I will only deliver to those families that want me to. If you need help call me on 07702171744 and once again, thank you to those who have already given their support, it really has made a difference. *Pam Lee*

Bishops Stortford Food Bank

We forgot to mention last month that there is a food bank at the Methodist Church on South Street in Bishops Stortford (supplied by the Harlow food bank). It is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 10.00 am and 12.30 pm. You need a voucher to get food which is obtainable from various places including Citizens Advice which is also on South Street.

Don't forget, your magazine is only as good as the content it receives, so please keep sending me your news, views, notices, concerns and complaints. Advertisers are also welcome. All copy should be submitted by the 16th of the month, preferably sooner and may be edited depending on space and content. Please contact me by E-mail, phone, or letter as shown below. Thank you and Kind Regards,

Join us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/birchanger/

Peter Sampson



magazine@birchanger.com



01279 813193



2 Harrisons, Birchanger

VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin

Multi Agency Trailer to Visit Birchanger

The Uttlesford Multi Agency Trailer is visiting Birchanger on Thursday May 21 arriving at 10 am. If you can find time to visit this trailer you will be able to discover just what services are on offer in Uttlesford. You will be surprised at the things you did not know about which would directly benefit you or someone you know. Free advice will be available from a variety of agencies, including Credit Union, Police and Fire Services, Housing, Family Well Being, and much more. The location will be confirmed next month but it is likely to be the Village Hall Car Park.

Rural Ramble at the Gardens of Eastern Lodge

Well it could be a bit more than that if you choose the guided 10 mile option, or perhaps you would prefer to try the four mile option this time. Failing that, there is a one mile option with a family trail. All the options include a visit to the gardens and cream tea. The date is Saturday April 16th. To sign up for this call 01245 380719.

Dog Bin reminder



People have again complained to the parish council that the dog bins often get full to overflowing. The council have checked with the company that empty the dog bins and they state that they have emptied the bins regularly according to requirements.

However, the council has been informed that some people are bringing their dog mess from their homes to put into the dog walkers bins. This is NOT what the bins have been provided for by the Parish Council. The District Council has been quite clear that dog waste produced on domestic premises must be put in the black bins at home and will be emptied by the District Council. In the unlikely event that the number of dogs at a property produces too much mess for the black bin, then the householder must make their own arrangements for the disposal of this waste. The residents of Birchanger cannot and should not subsidise any commercial operation disposing of dog waste into the dog bins which are provided and paid for by the Parish Council. Those bins are for dog walkers in the village only.

An additional bin is to be provided for dog walkers just outside the recreation ground. Please do not use the general waste bin inside the Recreation Ground as it is very unpleasant for the volunteers who kindly empty the bin placed there for clean waste disposal.

Birchanger All Girls Society

The 'BAGS' invite women of all ages to join them on the last Wednesday of every month in the village church hall

Forthcoming Meetings:

All meetings are cancelled until further notice

Please keep in contact so that we can support each other through these difficult times

Telephone for details

Olivia: 07568 574703 Rosemary: 01279 814678

Cut Back on Packaging

More and more shops are inviting customers to bring their own containers for items such as detergents, cereals and many other commercially packaged items. It is cheaper as you simply pay for the weight of the product not the packaging. Nearly every town across Essex has at least one such outlet. We also have one in Bishops Stortford at "18".

Single use coffee cups are almost impossible to recycle as they have a thin layer of plastic which is hard to separate from the cardboard container. Waitrose asked customers to bring their own and the practice is spreading.

Time to Get Out and About Again?

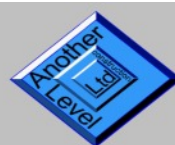
Spring is a difficult time of year. We are somehow very self-conscious about going out especially this year when Corona virus seems to impact all our lives. Money matters may be worrying especially as the fuel bills arrive, maybe you are a carer and are feeling isolated, or perhaps you have difficulties and need help but are uncertain where to find it. There is a number you can call between 8am and 7pm where advice can be found on a wide range of issues. Call 0300 303 9987 or email: livewell.linkwell@nhs.net.

All Fired Up at Saffron Walden Museum

From April 4 to July 22 there will be a new exhibition running for four months at the museum which focuses on fire fighting in Essex. The exhibition will show how new technology throughout the years has totally transformed our approach to fighting a fire. You can learn about the courage of the firefighters and how they function as a team. Stansted Fire Station is recruiting 'On-Call Firemen' at the moment. If you or a friend are interested in joining the service why not give them a call? Note! The museum is closed until further notice.

Having a Pet is Good for You

That is apparently official. New figures suggest that children who are brought up with a pet suffer fewer illnesses or allergies than those without. Six months into owning a dog those who suffer from high blood pressure find it has significantly reduced. People talk to their pets, tell them things they would never tell any human, but it seems to bring relief just the same. Well behaved pets brought into work seem to make employees happier and consequently they work better. A small price to pay for night time walks, muddy paws, and all those vets' bills perhaps? Somehow a gold fish just does not quite cut it!



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Helping Your Neighbour

As seen elsewhere in the magazine there are plans to try to coordinate help for those who are sick or quarantined because of coronavirus. Individuals may suddenly find themselves stuck at home for an indefinite period with no prior notice and are totally unprepared.

It is a time when we all must look after each other. We never know when it could hit us and panic buying has left the rest of us without vital supplies in many cases. If you need help in the first instance and no other source is available, please call Peter Sampson 01279 813193 or me (Elizabeth Godwin) on 01279 812793.

Citizens Advice Temporary Office Closure Due to Coronavirus

In view of the latest government advice, East Herts Citizens Advice, who has an office in Bishops Stortford, will no longer be offering face to face advice. Advice is still available through the helpline on 03444 111 444 or contact us online at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/web-chat-service/>.

Re-launched Dementia Activity Group in Dunmow

People living with dementia can now benefit from a weekly Activity Group in Dunmow run by Essex charity Action for Family Carers. Over 50 people in the area already attend similar groups mixing with others and participating in a variety of mentally and physically stimulating activities ranging from seated exercise, indoor bowling, reminiscence discussions and games, often including music.

Action for Family Carers has taken over management of the groups which were previously run by the Alzheimer's Society. The Groups are led by a small team of professional and caring staff and a large number of dedicated local volunteers. Morning sessions, called Keeping Active, focus on physical activity and afternoon sessions, called Active Minds, focus on activities to stimulate the mind.

Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and can help overall wellbeing. It can give opportunities to spend time with others, reducing isolation and loneliness and support people to continue being independent. Cognitive stimulation involves activities and exercises that stimulate thinking, concentration, communication and memory in the person with dementia. It involves talking about day-to-day interests, reminiscence and information relating to the current time and place.

Speaking about the Activity Groups, Action for Family Carers' CEO, James Clarke said "We are delighted to be supporting people living with dementia in West Essex".

The Activity Group takes place in the Dourdan Pavilion, Dunmow on Mondays from 10.00 am to 12.30pm and 1.00 to 3.30pm. New members are welcome. The sessions are £18 each with a free taster session available. Call Clare Savva on 07851 249707 or email clare.savva@affc.org.uk.



Utlesford
Frontline
one minute referrals

When seeking help, turn to Frontline

Love it or loathe it, the Internet has become integral to our daily lives. However, it's not always easy or straightforward to navigate through hundreds of websites to find just what we're looking for. It's particularly true when matters of health and wellbeing are at stake. Say, for instance, you're a carer looking for some form of support, or you have a loved one with dementia. Where can you turn to find information that is trustworthy, reliable and up-to-date?

This is where Frontline comes in. A digital service pioneered by Citizens Advice and supported by Essex County Council and the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS) it enables anyone - the public or professionals - to find sources of help and advice in their local community.

Frontline is a veritable treasure trove of information. It's simple-to-use and invaluable when it comes to finding out what's available locally and who can provide genuine assistance. For example, you may want to find out what support there is for someone who's housebound, suffering from depression, needs to exercise or is disabled. Simply enter what sort of help you're looking for or search under the following categories: Advice; Family; Older People; Mental Health; Disability; Addiction; Transport and Wellbeing.

Often surprising, it's well worth browsing through the entire Frontline library to discover just how many services are listed and the range of help that is available locally (there are 196 services currently!) Each includes a full description, contact details and details on how it is delivered. What's more, it's often possible to self-refer rather than having to go through a GP.

Frontline also offers access to detailed fact sheets such as Local Transport Options, How to Complain if you're not happy with a local health provider, Planning Ahead for Later Life, to name just three. Not everyone has internet access, of course. So if help is needed to find a local service, Healthwatch Essex is available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday (0300 500 1895 - calls charged at local rate).

Frontline is continuously expanding as both the public and professionals discover the many advantages of this easy, one-stop access to support and advice in the local community.

Access to Frontline is via: www.utlesfordfrontline.org.uk



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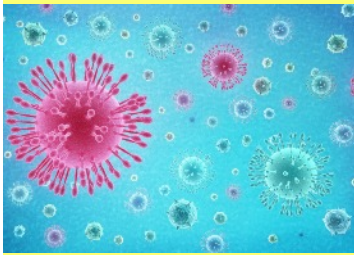


Help Protect Against Coronavirus

Neighbourhood Watch encourage you to consider ways to keep yourself, your loved ones and those in your community as safe as possible. Help can be found on the government website as follows: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Consider the following action to help protect yourself and those around you:

Discuss with household members, relatives, and friends and neighbours what to do if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community and what the needs of each person will be.



If you haven't done so already, consider joining the Birchanger Residents page on Facebook to keep in contact with neighbours and get local information. Alternatively, share phone numbers and email addresses

particularly with those who are isolated or vulnerable.

For Birchanger residents at risk that need help please contact Peter Sampson on 01279 813193 or email peter.sampson@talktalk.net who will coordinate any enquiries for help with local volunteers.

Plan ways to care for those who might be at greater risk of serious complications.

Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy.

Learn how to self-isolate. Guidance can be found on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

Create a list of local organisations that you and your neighbours can contact in the event that one of you needs access to information, healthcare services, support, or resources. Consider including organisations that provide mental health or counselling services, food, and other supplies.

Create an emergency contact list of family, friends, neighbours, healthcare providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, and other community resources.

Learn about the emergency operations plan at your child's school or childcare facility, and your employer's emergency operations plan.

Practice everyday preventive actions including regular hand washing. The NHS provides guidance on how to wash hands: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>.

The World Health Organisation provides guidance on basic protective measures: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Help Thy Neighbour!

Reach out to your neighbours who may be self-isolating through illness or age. You can help in a number of ways. For example you could exchange telephone numbers and phone them for a chat. You could also exchange email addresses or let them know about the social media that you use.

You could pick up their medication and collect their shopping, taking care of course to adhere to hand washing guidelines and avoiding direct contact. A person's recovery from illness can often be helped with social contact and the knowledge that others care.

When helping neighbours, especially the aged and those at risk, please remind them to be vigilant of scammers! There are always opportunists who will take advantage of unwary and vulnerable people. Make sure they do not give out their bank cards or PIN numbers to anyone, including seemingly helpful people on the phone. Scammers and fraudsters will always be on the lookout for ways to coerce and manipulate our most vulnerable residents.

Coronavirus Scam Alert

Cyber criminals are using concerns about the coronavirus to launch phishing attacks

Learn to identify and protect yourself against such attacks





While COVID-19, or the novel coronavirus, is capturing attention around the world, cyber criminals are capitalizing on the public's desire to learn more about the outbreak. There are reports of phishing scams that attempt to steal personal

information or to infect devices with malware, and adverts that peddle false information or scam products.

What Should You Do?

1. If you are looking for information on the coronavirus, visit known reputable websites like the World Health Organization.
2. Be on the lookout for phishing emails, which may appear to come from a trusted source. Remember, you can look at the sender's details – specifically the part of the email address after the '@' symbol – in the 'From' line to see if it looks legitimate.
4. Although social media companies like Facebook are cracking down on adverts spreading coronavirus conspiracies and fake cures, some ads may make it past their review process. Remember, it's best to seek information on the disease from official sources like the World Health Organisation, NHS sites, or Public Health England.
6. Finally, to protect your devices against malware like the types that can come from a phishing attack, ensure that you have installed virus protection on your devices and ensure it is regularly updated. *Peter Sampson*

What's on in the village...

		April 2020				
Note! Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the activities shown below are most likely cancelled. Please contact the arranger of the event for the latest information.						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Bin Collections: Bradley Common collected on Fridays. Rest of Birchanger on Thursdays. Garden bin collections marked with #						
Birchanger Parish Council Meetings: Meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the church hall - Open to the public.						
Church hall: 11.00 Petal Senses 19.30 Adult Ballroom and Latin Dance	Church hall: 13.00 Petals Baby Yoga 15.55 Ballet 3-4yrs 16.30 Ballet 5-7yrs 18.30 Apton Dance	1 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 15.45 Fencing 18.30 Apton Dance	2 Green Bin# Church hall: 10.00 Alzheimer's 12.30 Line dance 13.45 Line dance 18.30 Apton dance	3 Church hall: 9.30 Baby Glows for toddlers	4 Church Hall: 9.00 Dance for Kids	5 St Mary's Church: Closed Church Hall: 12.00 Birchanger Litter Pickers Volunteers
6 Church hall: 11.00 Petal Senses 19.30 Adult Ballroom and Latin Dance	7 Church hall: 13.00 Petals Baby Yoga 15.55 Ballet 3-4yrs 16.30 Ballet 5-7yrs 18.30 Apton Dance	8 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 15.45 Fencing 18.30 Apton Dance	9 Black bin Church hall: 10.00 Alzheimer's 12.30 Line dance 13.45 Line dance 18.30 Apton dance	10 Church hall: 9.30 Baby Glows for toddlers	11 Church Hall: 9.00 Dance for Kids	12 St Mary's Church: Closed
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27 Church hall: 11.00 Petal Senses 19.30 Adult Ballroom and Latin Dance	28 Church hall: 13.00 Petals Baby Yoga 15.55 Ballet 3-4 yr 16.30 Ballet 5-7yrs 18.30 Apton Dance	29 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 15.45 Fencing 18.30 Apton Dance	30 Green Bin # Church hall: 10.00 Alzheimer's 12.30 Line dance 13.45 Line dance 18.30 Apton dance	TAKEAWAY FOOD AVAILABLE The Three Willows Pub and The Sports and Social Club are both offering Takeaway food at the moment due to the coronavirus outbreak. Details can be found on their websites and Facebook pages or give them a call.		

Live Entertainment - Great Food - Excellent Bar - Snooker - Darts - Pool - Football - Cricket - Bowls

Sports & Social Club News



Birchanger Sports & Social Club 'Special Services'

Dear Members & Villagers,

Our New Order & Collect Service From the Club

We hope all of you and your families are safe and well at this difficult time.

As with many businesses, the Club is taking stock of events and implications surrounding COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic. The Club committee and management are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the staff; protecting the financial stability of the club and also in continuing to provide a service to the village.

The club building is now **CLOSED** until further notice. However, we wish to introduce our new food & drink take-away and 'Essentials' sales service to ALL Birchanger villagers as well as all club members.

As well as ordering hot meals and drinks for collection, you can also order basic household and food items such as; bread, milk, sugar, eggs and sanitary items etc., (subject to availability). For full details, go to our website: <http://www.birchangerclub.com/> or call: 01279 813441.

Villagers and club members can order by calling the club then collect from the club at an agreed time. A limited door to door delivery service *may* be available within the village to our most vulnerable customers, please ask when you order.

Open Daily From Saturday March 21

4.00 pm-9.00 pm

(Except Monday's - Closed)

Please order by phoning 01279 813441

Ask for allergen / dietary information when ordering food

Orders are subject to availability and limits on purchases may apply. Your patience is appreciated

Birchanger Sports & Social Club
229 Birchanger Lane, Birchanger, CM23 5QJ
Tel: 01279 813441 Email: club@birchanger.com
www.birchangerclub.com



Birchanger Primary School

This term we have been focusing our learning on the topic 'Best of British'. During this term we have been looking at British art by carrying out an artist study of Grayson Perry. The children have also been learning about Anglo-Saxon settlements by visiting West Stow in Suffolk.

During Book Week the children spent time studying a book by a British author and reviewed the book as part of their learning. Half way through the week, the school was visited by Stuart Simmons, the author of the 'Hannah the Spanner' books and he talked about his work and inspirations for writing.

At the end of the week the children dressed as a book character and the day was filled with lots of Harry Potters, Alice in Wonderlands and Boys in Dress plus a very wide range of other book characters which the children had discovered from their reading. The children had a great day thanks to Mrs Vessey who led the week.

We plan to extend our topic on the 19th March by treating our mothers for an afternoon tea and 'Open Classrooms' where our families can wander into the classrooms and talk to the children about their work. We shall end our topic by holding a geography week where the children are going to explore our beautiful school grounds and find out more about the local area, so look out for our children exploring the streets of Birchanger as they find out more about the geography of our village.

We shall launch the geography week by opening our doors at 3.15pm on 27th March so that our families can plant one of the one hundred trees that the school has received from the Woodland Trust. If you would like to come and join us and plant a tree yourself then you would be most welcome to join us.

On Saturday 25th April our doors will be open to the whole community as we plant up our nature garden to create a relaxing space to support wellbeing and learning.

We are very fortunate to be able to rejuvenate our garden which has been made possible by the work of the local charity Human Roots and grants from a number of local organisations including our Parish Council. We shall open our gates at 9.00am and will be open all day, so please join us if you can.

All the above activities are of course subject to the government instruction on the coronavirus outbreak at the time.

Claire Berry - Headteacher

One for Nobs - Cribbage Success!

Birchanger A team has won the Bishops Stortford crib league for the first time in 40 years!

Pictured below is the A team with team captain Elaine Wright (front row 2nd from left). All being well, they will receive the hard earned prestigious crib trophy in September 2020. The Birchanger B team were also on top form and were runners up, which was also unheard of until now!



Sunday Walks Departing at 10.00am 5/6 miles

Due to the Corona outbreak and government recommendations all walks are cancelled until further notice.

The very strong winds and the heavy rainfall in February caused dangerous conditions from falling and fallen trees. The club wisely cancelled the first planned walk, whilst the second walk, a cross-country/field and copse walk, was changed to a road and track walk. The group of 10 people who turned out for the walk returned wet but otherwise without damage! Both these walks will be 'banked' and walked at a future date.

The proposed new garden town to the north of Harlow will encompass massive areas of South East Herts. There are a huge number of footpaths in and around Gilston and these, together with the wide areas of open views afforded, will be lost if the area is covered in housing. The consultation sadly closes in mid-March, so by the time this article reaches you, it will be too late for comments. However, if you have any queries about any aspect of the consultation please contact a member of the Planning Policy Team on 01279 655261 or email: planningpolicy@eastherts.gov.uk.



Wood Anemones in Birchanger Wood, Photo by Peter Sherlock.

Daphne Wallace-Jarvis, Publicity Officer:
dwwjwj.444@gmail.com www.walksaroundstortford.org.uk



STOP STANSTED EXPANSION

Money saving tips from SSE

The price to pay for cheap flights from Stansted Airport is that passengers get fleeced from the moment they arrive at the airport until the moment they board their plane. So, if you're brave enough to disregard the current health risks and you are booked on a flight from Stansted, here are a few money-saving tips:

Buy your holiday currency beforehand

A survey carried out at major UK airports in February found that Stansted gave by far the worst exchange rate for converting UK pounds into euros. The Stansted Bureau de Change was giving just €395 for £500, whereas on the same day, you could get €565 at Luton Airport and €576 from your local Tesco store – a staggering £181 more. Foreign currency can also be bought at other local supermarkets, banks and Post Offices and so the message is to shop around beforehand. Don't wait until you get to the airport.

Passenger drop-off rip-off

Since MAG acquired Stansted from BAA, annual car parking earnings have soared from £27 million to £91 million in the space of just six years. Stansted's car parking revenues now exceed Gatwick's and are the highest for any UK airport except Heathrow.

On 27th February Stansted increased its passenger drop-off charge by £1.00 for the second time in less than a year. It now stands at £5.00, making Stansted the UK's most expensive airport for dropping off passengers. Neither Heathrow nor Gatwick makes any drop-off charge.

Residents discount scheme

Although it is not widely advertised, Birchanger residents (and other local villages and towns) can avoid the drop-off rip-off by registering for the local residents discount scheme. The scheme provides a reduced charge of only 60p for those living within a 5-mile radius of Stansted Airport and a £1.00 charge for those living within a 10-mile radius. The application form is available at <https://live-webadmin-media.s3.amazonaws.com/media/6871/application-for-local-residents-scheme.pdf> or by emailing dd_carparking@stanstedairport.com.

Airport eating and shopping

It's not a good idea to arrive at the airport hungry because everything from a burger to a cup of coffee can cost up to twice as much as in the equivalent restaurant, bar or coffee shop in Bishops Stortford. And, before you splash out on so-called 'duty free' spirits or perfume, consider what the same products cost in your local High Street or supermarket. You'll find that bargains are few and far between.

Brian Ross

Stop Press - Coronavirus

VE Day Cancelled

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the VE75 Day festivities planned for 8th May 2020 has been postponed to a later date yet to be decided.

Birchanger Sports & Social Club

The club is closed in accordance with government instructions (see page 7). However, a takeaway and special services shop is available. For full details, go to the club's website www.birchangerclub.com or call 01279 813441 for the latest information.

St. Mary's Church

The church is closed until further notice due to the coronavirus.

Stansted Mountfitchet U3A 10th Anniversary 2019-20



February 15th was particularly wet and windy, remember Storm Dennis? Nevertheless a coach load of members, led by our Chairman, Ray Smith, visited the Wellcome Genome Campus at Hinxton. This interesting and informative visit was the prelude to the formation of the Science and Technology Group. We saw where the scientists work, the equipment they use and were told how the genetic codes of plants and animals, including humans, are being established.

The Pub Lunch group met at the Nag's Head in Bishop's Stortford in February and enjoyed a tasty meal. They normally choose a pub close to Stansted during the winter but hope to venture further away during the spring.



Several events have been planned for April and May which may be cancelled due to the coronavirus. This includes the General Meeting on April 16th, 1.30 for 2.00, at St John's Hall, when Alan Haines will present "The Baby Boomer Nostalgia Show", a humorous look at life for those born in the 50's and 60's. On the 27th the Bus Pass Group plan to visit St Ives market on the Busway bus, one of the many interesting visits in their programme for 2020. This programme can be seen on the Trips and Events pages on the website.

At the Saturday Seminar on May 2nd, Georgina Ferry will talk about the life of the Nobel Prizewinning scientist Dorothy Hodgkin. Tickets can be booked on the website.

The Stansted Mountfitchet U3A Strummers have been invited by the Parish Council to play at the official opening of the Mountfitchet Exchange on Tuesday April 7th and also at the VE Day Celebrations in the Memorial Gardens on Friday May 8th.

To confirm that the above events will take place, please contact Anne White, Stansted Mountfitchet U3A. Tel: 07874 385541 www.u3asites.org.uk/stansted



The Hundred Parishes Society

One of the delights of a woodland walk on a sunny April day is the sweet scent wafting from the massed flowers of the English bluebell. One of our best-loved wildflowers, with half of the world's population found in the UK, it is typically associated with ancient woodlands but can also occur at the base of long-established hedgerows.



The narrow glossy leaves and flower spikes are produced from deeply rooted bulbs supported by specialised symbiotic fungi. The flowers are a deep violet-blue, but sometimes white or pink spikes occur. The flowers are narrow, tubular-bell shaped, with tips that curl backwards, and the pollen is cream-coloured. They are arranged on one side of a drooping stem. After pollination by honeybees and other insects many green capsules form which will hold large numbers of ripe black seeds. The seeds are shaken from the capsules by breezes or by animals running through the woods.

The introduced and invasive Spanish bluebell has broader leaves. Its pale blue, unscented flowers are arranged all around the upright stem and are more open revealing blue pollen. Encouragingly, recent research has found that the native species has a genetic advantage due to the sheer weight of numbers and greater fertility and so should continue to thrive.



Apart from the woods in Birchanger, locations where it is possible to see carpets of bluebells include the Hertfordshire Way as it passes through Sidehill Wood, Mill Wood in Much Hadham and Howe Wood in Littlebury beside Strethall Road as it crosses over the M11

motorway. Photos: Bluebells in Littlebury - Howe Wood.

Several walks described on our website pass through woodlands. Walk number 4 goes through a fine bluebell wood at Rickling whilst the longer walk number 20 visits Mill Wood. Details of woods or nature reserves to visit can be found on these websites:

www.Uttlesford-Wildlife.org.uk and

www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk.

Tricia Moxey, Trustee. www.hundredparishes.org.uk

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

On a cold, wet March day it is lovely to look forward to April and the prospect of blue skies, some warmth, bluebells and peonies. Hopefully our April 26th open day will be properly spring-like. Of course, with global warming, we can't be certain what flowers will be out and when. For what it's worth, my guess is that unlike last year, we will not have narcissi but we may well have apple blossom and possibly our first alliums.

We are looking forward to welcoming visitors to our open day so that we can show them the huge amount of work we have undertaken over the winter months. The Italian Garden is looking lovely with planted urns at the top of the renovated steps. The ferns in the stumpery are filling it out, the Japanese garden has new features together with new trees and the last bit of the walled kitchen garden has been tamed, making space for a little orchard in addition to the fruit trees lining the walls and paths.



On 26th of April the gate will open at 11.30am and there will be the usual catering and the chance to meet our beekeeper and turners of our wood. Light fun music will be provided by the Ukes of Hazard band and there will be children's activities. If you can't wait till our open day on the 26th, you could join one of the Helen Rollason Rural Rambles on 18th April, which finish at the Gardens. The entry fee for the 1, 4 or 10 mile walk helps fund the work of this wonderful charity and provides for entry to the Gardens and a complimentary cream tea. These events are subject to the effect of coronavirus so for further details and latest information, please check on our website: www.eastonlodge.co.uk Jill Goldsmith

The Three Horseshoes



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Village Services and Activities

Alzheimer	Marian	07803 115826
Art Studio & Gallery	Heather Brown	01279 815453
Art Studio & Gallery	Brian Gough	01279 815012
Ballroom Dance	Fred Winters	01763 271942
Ballet for kids	Philippa McMeechan	01763 271010
Birchanger Magazine	Peter Sampson	01279 813193
BAGS	Rosemary Wheatley	01279 814678
Birchanger Voices	Tony Wilson	01279 813007
Birchanger Nursery	Karen Reilly	01279 810800
Bird Food	Lesley Robins	01279 812248
Builders - Another Level	Matt Marks	01279 814273
BSSC Club	Charlie Moore	01279 813441
Chiropodist	Julie Golden	01279 873492
Car Service	D. Bonney	01279 813315
Dementia	Debbie Baker	07927 011345
Dance	Maxine Williams	07854 251528
Garden Services	GWB Horticulture	01799 543483
Hairdresser Men/Boys	Emma Marks	01279 814273
Line Dancing	Shelley	01279 864781
Launderette	Ian Kennedy	01279 866183
Nail & Pedicure	Hien's Nails	01279 507019
Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Sampson	01279 813193
Over 60's club	Jean Camp	07843 707249
Painting & Décor	David Debnam	07973 861268
Parish Clerk	Keith Williams	01279 814773
Petals Children's Play	Hana Hainsby	07730 619522
Police Special	Martin Halls Martin.Halls@essex.police.uk	
Property Services	Mark Taylor	07941 357934
Public Safety	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
St. Mary's Church	Elaine Wright	01279 813474
Tai Chi	Cait Goddard	07415 628935
The Three Horseshoes	Paul & Paula	01279 813429
The Three Willows	Mark Boden	01279 815913
Village Church Hall	Barbora Dragoskova	01279 815243

Village Church Hall



Due to the coronavirus, the hall is closed until further notice

Elaine Wright, On behalf of the Hall trustees

Hall Administrator - Barbora Dragoskova Tel. 01279 815243
Email st.johns.church@btinternet.com

Key Holder - Elaine Wright Tel. 01279 813474
Email: stmaryschurch.birchanger@gmail.com

St. Mary's Church News



Church services

Due to the coronavirus the church will be closed until further notice

Church News

As I write this I do not know whether the events below will be going ahead or not due to the current coronavirus outbreak. We are working with the advice given from The NHS and Public Health England and the Diocese. Advice for the clergy and churches also covers frequently asked questions, digital resources, prayer and scripture. If you wish to view this information please click or copy the following link: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

On the 8th March at the end of our morning service our Rector Paul Wilkin informed the congregation that he was stepping down as Benefice rector and retiring after 13 years of service at the end of September. As you can imagine the congregation were all surprised to hear this news as Paul was due to retire next year, however Paul has decided that this year is the right time for him to retire. Our prayers of love and thanks and best wishes go to him and his wife Janet. There will be some festivities around his leaving date and I will keep you all informed.

The Parochial Church Council will hold its annual general meeting after the morning service on the 26th April. All are welcome.

Many of you may feel anxious and worried, therefore we must all pull together and help each other and pray that Jesus will help and guide us. Here is a short prayer for us all

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.

In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to care for the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.
Amen.

Dates for your Diary:

(Subject to confirmation due to coronavirus)

The following dates are subject to change due to the Corona Virus.
12th May, Coffee morning at Moorswood 10:30 am.

13th June, St Marys Musical Charity Night with the Stansted U3A choir and Birchanger Voices (to be held in the hall)

In many villages people are coming together to help the vulnerable, some are offering to volunteer at the local food bank, others are helping with shopping, and in some cases just a phone call, If you have any concerns or want help then contact us via the email below or via our Facebook page, or call 01279 813474. We will be able to help in some way. Stay safe and remember; Catch it, Bin it, Kill it! Blessings.

Elaine Wright, Church Warden, St Mary's Church Birchanger
stmaryschurch.birchanger@gmail.com

Village Church Hall



For information and bookings contact;
Barbora Dragoskova 01279 815243
st.johns.church@btinternet.com
Key Holder - Elaine Wright 01279 813474
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Anyone who would like to help in any way.
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Email:
stmaryschurch.birchanger@gmail.com



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