



Birchanger Village Magazine

December 2021

Issue 227



Public Meeting - Travellers' Appeal Decision



Following the decision of the Planning Inspectorate to allow the travellers to remain in Birchanger, a public meeting was held at the village hall on the 5th November in order to explain the decision and to allow residents to ask questions and voice their opinions. The meeting was chaired by Brian Ross and included representatives from the parish and district councils as well as the Chief Executive of Uttlesford District Council, Mr. Peter Holt. The following letter was sent to Peter Holt as a summary of the meeting from the residents' point of view:

Letter to UDC From Birchanger Residents

May I start by thanking you on behalf of the residents of Birchanger for attending our public meeting on Friday evening. This helped to ensure such a good attendance and, although there were points of fundamental disagreement, there was collective respect for your decision to attend the meeting and to set out the Council's position.

You will recall that the meeting opened with reference to the three points contained in the residents' petition to the Council, as follows:

To lodge an appeal with the High Court under s.288 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to seek a judicial review of the decision to grant permanent permission, noting that this does not provide for any change in circumstances.

Notwithstanding the above, UDC should provide a clear written assurance to Birchanger Parish Council, that compliance with the conditions attached to the said permission will be closely monitored, and UDC will not hesitate to take effective enforcement action in the event of any non-compliance; and

UDC should also provide written confirmation to Birchanger Parish Council that great importance is attached to protecting the Green Belt around Birchanger and UDC will do all in its power to keep this land permanently open so as to protect the separate identity of Birchanger and prevent any coalescence with Bishop's Stortford to the south or with Stansted Mountfitchet to the north.

In closing the meeting, I referred back to these three points and, dealing with them in reverse order, I summarised as follows:

You provided an "emphatic Yes" to the question arising from the petition: "will UDC do all in its power to protect the Green Belt around Birchanger?" This reassurance is very welcome.

You cautioned against any expectation that enforcement action could happen abruptly. UDC had to have regard to the Travellers' rights, and you felt some of the language in the petition ("will not hesitate to take effective enforcement action") was inappropriate. However, you gave a firm assurance that UDC would take enforcement action where necessary

You acknowledged that the Council's planning department was 'not the best in the world' and needed to improve, but you did not intend to appeal the Inspector's decision. Your legal advice was that the likelihood of success was low, and you were concerned about costs. You did however leave the door slightly open, saying that you would have no objection if I were to arrange for a planning QC to discuss the matter directly with the UDC solicitor and you would be open-minded if that discussion led to any change in your solicitor's advice.

Following last Friday's meeting I contacted both of the planning QCs whom I have worked with closely for a number of years. Both are currently in the midst of major planning inquiries but one of them has taken time to review the Inspector's decision letter. However, he is not prepared to give advice to UDC as to the likelihood of success in a judicial review application. He is clear that UDC needs to take its own advice and make its own decision.

The Inspector's decision to allow the Travellers to remain is considered justified but the granting of permanent consent may be arguable. The Inspector seeks to justify this as follows:

"72. My conclusions on need and supply, the availability of alternative sites and the best interests of the children point to a grant of planning permission. I have considered whether this....

>Continued on Page 2<

should be a temporary planning permission, having regard to the harm to the Green Belt and the Council's LP situation. However, it appears in the absence of any information, that these matters are unlikely to be resolved in the short or medium term. This is even taking into account the Government requirement that all Councils should have an up-to-date local plan in place by 2023. As such a temporary planning permission would not be proportionate as it would not balance the protection of the public interest against the families' human rights."

Even if alternative sites are not available in the short term, they can be made available in the medium or long term, after the new Local Plan is in place, hopefully by 2023. In addition, the weight attached to the best interest of the children will fall away in medium and long term, noting that Condition 1 appears to provide only for the current dependants of the families.

Will you please, at least, take a second legal opinion and reconsider the option of an appeal, having regard to the acknowledged failings of the Council in this case and in order to demonstrate that the Council attaches great importance to the objective clearly set down in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 133) to keep Green Belt land permanently open?

Yours sincerely Brian Ross, on behalf of Birchanger Residents

UDC's Response

In answer to the residents' letter of the 9th November, Mr. Peter Holt from Uttlesford District Council replied on the 12th November. Below is an excerpt from the letter which has been edited and shortened due to space limitations of the magazine. *(The full letter can be viewed on the Birchanger Parish Council website at <https://www.birchanger.com/>)*

Thank you for welcoming me at the public meeting on 5th November 2021 and permitting me to set out the Council's position, in relation to the appeal.

The Council's position on pursuing a statutory challenge is unequivocal as a firm 'no, sorry'. The Council's legal advice clearly sets out there is no lawful basis to challenge the decision of the Planning Inspector to grant planning permission in this appeal, and to be helpful, I shared that legal advice in advance.

In general terms the threshold to cross to overturn a Planning Inspector's decision on appeal is high and the Council's legal officers cannot find any grounds of challenge in law, policy or fact that would amount to a likely successful challenge. As mentioned in the meeting, the inspector's conclusion is not a decision which the Council likes, but that is not in and of itself a basis to challenge a decision, as we need to find a legal problem in his decision.

The Council's opposition remained resolute through our arguments in the appeal before the Planning Inspector. Our disappointment with the Planning Inspector's decision to grant planning permission, with certain conditions, is acute. However, UDC has accepted the appellants have won their case, and whilst we continue not to like the decision and disagree with it, we are stuck with it in absence of any legal basis to challenge.

I also made clear in the meeting, as chief executive of the council, I must be mindful of spending tens of thousands of pounds of taxpayer's money for an appeal in the absence of a winning legal strategy or reasonable prospects of success. I am simply not willing to spend this money just out of sadness or anger, and nor am I prepared to raise false hopes amongst local people that such an expensive endeavour might lead to the result that they want, however much sympathy I have with their feelings.

Brian Ross referred to two eminent but unnamed QCs that he had spoken with and could present an arguable or winnable challenge. I agreed to Brian's suggestion, as I was content for the Council's legal officers to speak directly with either or both of the two unnamed QCs.

I now understand neither of the QCs suggested by Brian are available or willing to speak to or meet directly with the Council's lawyers over prospects of a statutory challenge.

The Planning Enforcement Team Leader, as case officer has already been in contact with the agents acting on behalf of the Travellers to remind them of the conditions and their responsibilities to ensure they have been complied with. However, to actively monitor the site is not normal practice for the Enforcement Team and the Council must ensure that no party is being singled out or treated any differently to other parties.

Where the Council is made aware of an alleged breach of planning conditions, the matter is investigated by the Council's Planning Enforcement Team. If a breach is confirmed, then it is assessed. If it is necessary the Council will take swift action, but as with any breach of planning control, the goal is to ensure the breach is remedied in a proportionate way and will be taken in line with the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance and other relevant legislation.

Without hesitation I can confirm that UDC remains committed to retaining the open nature of the Green Belt throughout the district. We continue to refuse development within the Green Belt, and our decisions continue to be accepted at appeal. In our recent Green Belt Study, the Green Belt around Birchanger was identified particularly important both in terms of preserving its open nature and preventing coalescence with other settlements. We will continue to do so, specifically on this site.

We can assure the Community that the Council remains committed to the protection of the Green Belt. This includes the areas around Birchanger, and the allowing of this development on this site does not in any way change that firm commitment.

I could not help but be moved by the strength and passion of local opinion I heard at the meeting, which I absolutely accept is genuine and heartfelt. I know that my answers in this letter, as at the meeting, are not going to satisfy everybody's hopes or expectations. I have though done my best to commit positively where I can act, whilst being honest and transparent about those aspects where I cannot see a successful route through.

Yours sincerely, Peter Holt

>See the latest on Page 4<

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



07817 904333



2 Harrison's, Birchanger

VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin

Planning Inspectorate Tosses the Metropolitan Green Belt Aside

The wishes and feelings of those who live in Birchanger were completely ignored by the inspectorate when he upheld the appeal by the travellers to remain in Birchanger. The travellers won their case to remain on the Birchanger Lane site despite the land being Metropolitan Green Belt and the fact that they did not apply for residential planning permission.

The inspector was more concerned about the needs of these few people than all the rest of Birchanger and seemed to ignore the fact that the site is in the Metropolitan Green Belt. People in Birchanger have the right to feel cheated and are the victims in this decision. They did not invite the travellers in! The land was purchased at an auction in North London, unbeknown to anyone in Birchanger. Planning permission was given for the land to be used for equestrian use, then on a quiet Sunday evening, almost three and a half years ago, the group moved in by stealth.

The manner in which the travellers acquired the land in Birchanger inflamed the village and at the public meeting last month, the new Chief Executive of the District Council, Peter Holt, refused to back a further appeal to overturn the decision. It is therefore hardly surprising that tempers are short in the wake of this decision and all respect for the District Council has evaporated. They clearly do not care about us. Their failure to provide a proper site for travellers also had a lot to do with the inspector's decision.

The focus of the Inspector's concern was the welfare of the children. Only travellers and their children currently on the site are allowed to stay there. However, the question remains, what happens when the children grow up? Will they be starting families and allowed to continue to live there? If so, caravans could more than double within 10 years.

In all my years with an interest in planning I have never come across such a cockamamie decision as this one. We have no say in the matter and are prevented from appealing the decision, according to the District Council, due to the expected high cost of an appeal. What chance have we got after this decision? The real concern now is that developers have put forward sites around the village in the Green Belt area, despite Boris Johnson's promise not to touch the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is also worrying that some of our

District Councillors do not believe that Birchanger is totally surrounded by Green Belt and think that some of it is only 'green fields'. This belief is very worrying. If Members of the District Council can't get it right, what chance does Birchanger have?

Crazy, Selfish Hit and Run in Birchanger Lane

Last month a motorbike rider had his motorbike severely damaged by a red car which failed to stop on the straighter piece of Birchanger Lane. The driver of the red car must have realised that they had hit someone, there will be damage to their own car but still they sped away past the stunned and shocked motorbike rider. Failing to stop after an accident is an offence but it is hoped that the driver of the red car will have the decency to come forward. The police were involved, and it is thought that they will have sufficient evidence to identify the driver. Speeding drivers on Birchanger Lane are an utter menace. They drive fast and are oblivious of other road users who they seem to think should not be there. It is time to think again about road safety in Birchanger and to seek further safety features to curtail this type of selfish driving.

Coffee Morning

The coffee morning will be held as usual at Moorswood 330 Birchanger Lane on Tuesday 7th December from 10.30 am to noon. All residents are welcome.

Christmas This Year Just Has to be Great

After the shock of Brexit, Coronavirus, unexpected shortages, spiralling gas prices we really need to be able to relax and unwind a little bit. I think the message for this Christmas has to be 'hope'. The hope is that the past 20 months will have taught us something, and that perhaps we are a little tougher than we used to be. We shall also be more resilient, better equipped to withstand tougher times and unwanted change. We all hope that things will start to come back to the normal we used to know. They may not, but with the changes there will be new things to get to know and enjoy. Birchanger knows how to celebrate special occasions and we can do our best to try to make Christmas special for everyone.

If people live alone, you could make sure that they are not alone at Christmas unless they convince you that it is their choice. Some people are alone by choice but others through circumstances have had loneliness foisted upon them. Several people have moved into the village in the past few months. Perhaps a friendly word might help them to feel at home. There is something for everyone in this. The lonely will know they are not forgotten, the confident will perhaps have found a new friend. My Christmas wish for everyone is that they find something to make them happier this Christmas.

Police Tackle Speeding at Last

Perhaps inspired by our own intrepid gang of speed watch volunteers, speeding on the A120 and other roads near Birchanger has been targeted at last and with some success it seems. One of those caught was a motorist travelling at 64 mph in a 30-mph limit. I don't think that was Birchanger Lane, although at times it feels that the cars are travelling at that sort of speed. Speeding may give the illusion of saving time, but it can turn out to be very expensive indeed.

Birchanger All Girls Society

There will be no BAGS meeting in December but we would like to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing everyone again in the new year.

If you are interested in joining please call or email us on:

bags@birchanger.com

Olivia: 07568 574703

Rosemary: 01279 814678

The Big Light Up

One of the highlights of Christmas in Birchanger is the wonderful light displays throughout the village. Hopefully this will be better than ever this year. The Big Light Up will as usual take place at the club at 7.00 pm on Friday 3rd December. Children from the school and The Birchanger Voices will be singing your favourite carols and the club will provide the usual Christmas cheer. A good night for everyone, so come and enjoy.

Watch Out Electric Scooters Are About

Ok they are illegal, but they are here in Birchanger. Hopefully our police will pick the lads up sooner or later, if they manage to survive that long. It would help if they knew which side of the road they should be riding on but it seems they don't. They are a particular menace in the dark. The combination of no lights and no road sense is lethal. For now, please drive very carefully in the Lane.

55 Arrests for Drug Offences in One Week

Sadly, we cannot delude ourselves that Birchanger is a drug free village anymore. We were once, but certain individuals resident in Birchanger are making sure that we lost our status, but hopefully not for much longer.

Essex police have woken up to the situation, not just in a few and very obvious hot spots. The recently held County Lines Intensification Week netted £180,000 in cash, 6 kilograms of drugs, assorted swords, knives, knuckledusters and phones were also seized. This resulted in the disruption of 13 County Lines gangs. County Lines operates with the input from children, so it was hardly surprising that ten of those caught were referred into care. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Much more has to be done to curtail the drug menace which is now wrecking our children's lives and is not just something that happens to somebody else.

It is here, now, in Birchanger. Don't let it wreck Christmas, but we have to do something. The problem is here and we as parents are in the best position to notice erratic behaviour and like brand new trainers and clothes for which there are no apparent reasons. Secret phone calls, staying out late, new older 'friends'. Do you know what that is about? Are you sure your children are safe and not being bullied into something they cannot get out of on their own? Families come together at Christmas and a lot of things come to the surface at this time.

Police Work Just Got More Fun



But only if you live in Maldon! There police teams have been given their first jet skis in a bid to make the waters round Maldon a safer place. A new way to tackle dangerous behaviour in the water. I would imagine the offenders will get an enormous

shock when they discover that the jet skier they thought they were racing is actually planning to arrest them.

Travellers Are Here to Stay

Continued from Page 2 - Conclusion

The Travellers are here to stay. Uttlesford District Council (UDC) refuse to spend any money on an appeal against the Planning Inspector's decision to allow the Travellers to remain permanently on the Green Belt site in Birchanger Lane which they occupied unlawfully more than three years ago.

The Travellers initially won their case because UDC failed in its statutory duty to provide suitable sites to meet the needs of Travellers. UDC failed even to carry out a proper assessment of the need for suitable Travellers sites in Uttlesford, again in breach of its legal duty.

Despite a Public Meeting, a Resident's Petition and a flurry of correspondence, UDC refuse to budge on the issue and the deadline for an appeal to the High Court has now passed.

The UDC Chief Executive has accepted the Council's failings and says that he "takes this on the chin". In reality, it's the residents of Birchanger who have to take this on the chin.

The UDC Chief Executive has however given Birchanger an "emphatic commitment ... without hesitation ... to protecting and preserving the Green Belt" in future. It will be important to hold UDC very firmly to that commitment at a time when developers are eyeing up the Green Belt all around Birchanger with proposals for new houses.

Saffron Walden Dementia Café

Every Wednesday 10am-12pm
Fairycroft House, Audley Road,
Saffron Walden CB11 3HD



Are you caring for or living with someone affected by Dementia / Alzheimer's or have you lost a loved one and would just like to chat? It's six months since we restarted and the group is buzzing with chatter and laughter, a fulfilling sight.

Why not pop along to our Dementia Café and enjoy companionship, support, activities, information, advice and of course refreshments. We meet weekly in Fairycroft House. Onsite parking available.

If you would like to find out more call 07900123917 or email saffronwaldendementiacafe@gmail.com

ENVIRO ELECTRICAL SERVICES

enviroelectricalservices@gmail.com



DANIEL ROSS
07703484090

City & Guilds Qualified
Part P Registered
DBS Checked

Friendly, Professional electrician with over 20 years experience based in Bishop's Stortford, offering all domestic electrical solutions in Herts & Essex



Taylor Landscapes
Landscapes For Living

07941 357934

mark.taylor@taylorsvcs.net

@TaylorLandscapesLtd

Golf Buggies Destroy Park Gates

One night in November, thieves stole two golf buggies from Bishop's Stortford Golf Club, drove to Birchanger and tried to gain access to the children's recreation ground. They damaged the gate beyond repair and went on to destroy fencing and allotments. The damage is estimated to be around £1000.



Why? No reason it seems, other than the enjoyment of wilfully causing damage to other people's property! Thankfully the gate held, so that even further damage was avoided. The police attended the scene and arranged for a recovery truck to return the buggies after taking forensic evidence. We live in hope that the police will find the hooligans.



Two Golf Buggies recovered by police

Stay Well for Christmas

It is quite clear that we haven't seen the back of the Covid virus yet. There are also flu virus infections around and if that was not enough, some very nasty stomach bugs as well.

We may not be able to prevent all the nasties getting to us one way or another, but we can make it more difficult for them to give us a nasty dose by getting the flu vaccine and making sure that we have our third Covid jab.

We can also do our own Covid testing twice a week using the free testing kits which are available in ECC libraries, chemists and online via the NHS. Each pack contains seven kits. It's worth the effort, especially if you travel and are out and about in public places.

Illegal Parking Continues in the Lane

Despite the erection of fencing and 'No Parking' signs drivers are still parking their vehicles in the lane close to the A120 roundabout. So brazen are some, that they went to the lengths of pushing back the fencing to make room for parking. Unbelievable! Police informed.



u3a

Stansted Mountfitchet U3A

On October 7th, thirty-four members visited Knole Park in Kent, the home of the Sackville family. They were impressed by the beautiful landscapes, an unusual but interesting house and an amazing art collection. They agreed that they had had a really good day.

The newly formed Gardening Group enjoyed a wonderful afternoon on October 11th when they visited Ulting Wick, the eleven-acre garden created by Philippa Burrough. The garden was awash with autumn colour and inspirational planting schemes.



The group toured the garden, enjoyed an introductory talk and, at the end of the tour, tea and cake on the terrace.

We welcomed Tony Diamond to the monthly meeting on

Thursday 21st October. His very amusing and informative talk was entitled "The History of Chocolate". It was followed by the AGM which had been held over from May 2020 because of Covid. At the AGM Susan Sedgebeer was welcomed as the new Chairman, Eric Fidell as the new Treasurer and three more members joined the committee. The committee is indebted to the outgoing Chairman, Ray Smith, Treasurer, Nigel Johnson and Speaker Secretary Gill Dean, and wish them all well with many thanks for their time and efforts over the last few years.

Our first meeting in December is on the ninth when banjo player Steve Geller will present "The Songs we Sang – a Career in Music". He will be playing some of the songs from the last fifty years. The speaker at our January meeting will be Brian Carline. His talk, "Our Street" is a pictorial representation of life in an industrial city in the 40s and 50s.

Our Christmas Lunch is at Bury Lodge on December 16th. Members who wish to join us should email their intention to stanstedu3a@gmail.com. See the November Newsletter for further details or telephone 07874 385541

What's on in the village...



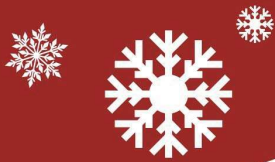
December 2021



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.**

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 14.00 Fencing 18.00 Apton Dance Studio	2 Green Bin Church hall: 11.00 Line dance 18.30 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	3 BSSC: 19.00 The Big Light Up Christmas Carols, Mulled Wine & Mince Pies	4 Church Hall: 09.00 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 13.00 Meat draw 20.00 Kenny Ward - Live	5 St Mary's Church: 11.15 am Matins BSSC: Sunday Roast
6 BSSC: Quiz Night	7 Church hall: 12.00 Tap Dance 16.45 Ballet 18.30 Apton Dance Studio 10.30 Coffee Morning at Moorswood	8 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 14.00 Fencing 18.00 Apton Dance Studio	9 Black Bin # Church hall: 11.00 Line dance 18.30 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	10	11 Church Hall: 09.00 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 13.00 Meat draw	12 St Mary's Church: 11.15 Holy Communion BSSC: Sunday Roast
13 BSSC: Quiz Night	14 Church hall: 12.00 Tap Dance 16.45 Ballet 18.30 Apton Dance Studio	15 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 14.00 Fencing 18.00 Apton Dance Studio	16 Green Bin Church hall: 11.00 Line dance 18.30 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	17 St Mary's Church: 19.00 Carol Service	18 Church Hall: 09.00 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 19.30 Fanny & DJ Dicks Festive Fun (Tickets only)	19 St Mary's Church: 11.15 Family Service BSSC: Kids Christmas Party
20 BSSC: Quiz Night	21 Church hall: 12.00 Tap Dance 16.45 Ballet 18.30 Apton Dance Studio	22 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 14.00 Fencing 18.00 Apton Dance Studio 19.30 BAGS BSSC: Open	23 Black Bin # Church hall: 11.00 Line Dance 18.30 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	24 BSSC: Christmas Eve open 12.00 to 23.00	25 St Mary's Church: 11.15 Christmas Communion BSSC: Xmas Day open 12.00 to 14.00 No food	26 St Mary's Church: No Service BSSC: Boxing Day open 12.00 to 22.00 No food
27 BSSC: Open No food	28 Church hall: 12.00 Tap Dance 16.45 Ballet 18.30 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: Open No food	29 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 14.00 Tea Room 14.00 Fencing 18.00 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: Open	30 Church hall: 11.00 Line Dance 18.30 Apton Dance Studio BSSC: Open	31 BSSC: Open from 12.00 to 01.00 New Year's Eve Disco	01 Jan 2022 BSSC: New Years day open from 12.00 to 22.00	



BIRCHANGER SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

WHAT'S ON AT THE CLUB

Fanny and DJ Dicks Festive Fun!

SATURDAY DECEMBER 18
7:30pm

Tickets only £20.00
Including 2 Course Meal

BOOKING ESSENTIAL!



'LIGHTS UP' Weekender

Our traditional village lights up will take place 3rd December



Birchanger
Voices and
Children's
Carol
Choir

Mulled
Wine

Mince
Pies

THE KENNY WARD EXPERIENCE

THE MAN - THE LEGEND
SAT 4th DECEMBER



**19th
DEC**

Members Only Kids
Christmas Party

Fun filled
afternoon
of Games and
Entertainment

NEW Christmas Menu

Available now to for bookings



Christmas Menu
December 1st - 24th - 3 Courses £24.95

Starters

Tomato & Basil Soup Garnished with Seasoned Croustons,
served with a Crusty Roll
Pate and Croûtes served with a
Red Onion & Port Preserve
Smoked Salmon & Grapes Chicken
topped with a Lentil Mashed Potato
Peppered Salmon Mushrooms
served on a Croûte

Main Course

Traditional Roast Turkeys
with all the Seasonal Trimmings
Salmon, Bannocks served on a
Bed of Cauliflower Mash
served with Clippis, Peas, Mushrooms and Tomato
Peppercorn Sauce (£1.50 supplement)
Mushroom Slice

For all general enquiries
Telephone: 01279 813441 Email: club@birchanger.com
Website: www.birchangerclub.com

Follow us on Social Media
For all news and announcements





Birchanger Primary School

Hello from Birchanger C of E Primary School

As you may know our vision statement is 'Life in All its Fullness' and during this month we have had plenty of opportunities to show this. The first of November was the first day that the children returned to school after half term. We always treat the first day after a return to school as a wellbeing day. During these days we focus on the NHS 5 ways to wellbeing 'Connect with Others and 'Give to Others'.

The activity for our children this half term was to write letters to refugee children who have come to our country from other parts of the world. The letters welcomed the children and shared some of the aspects of British life that they enjoyed the most. The families who received the letters were very touched by the time and effort given by our children.

We marked Remembrance and the 100th anniversary of the poppy appeal at our school. Our older children were able to bring the poppies to children in the different classes this year and the children wore their poppies with pride. On 11th November all of the children and the staff stood in the playground for two minutes whilst we paid our respects.



Over the years the children have learned about the work of the British Legion and the amazing work that it does to support its members and others affected by war. In recognition of this, our school is affiliated with the British Legion and during our collective worship on Friday 12th John Monk came into school and presented our certificate of affiliation to Alex, one of our head boys. Although John is from Takeley, he has a link with Birchanger. His grandfather's name is amongst the names on the war memorial in our churchyard. For Remembrance Sunday our head girls and one of our head boys, Evie, Nathan, and Sarah attended St Mary's church. They read out the names of the fallen and joined the congregation led by Pam Lee for the service.

November is a busy month for annual events as we also marked Children in Need with a non-uniform day. Our school council voted for a spotty theme and so we saw spotty socks, spotty tee shirts, scarves and lots of other creative ideas along the way. During the week, the children started the 'Together we can change' message by trying lots of new sporting activities with each other and the week ended with a human chain around our school field. The money that we raised will be sent in to support the wide range of good causes supported by this excellent charity.



As I write this article, we are preparing to mark anti bullying week. This event also takes place every year and the theme for 2021 is 'One kind word'. Our Year 5 children are our antibullying ambassadors and they will lead the school with activities and information during our worship sessions. The work that these children will do is guided by the Diana

Award charity and this charity awards badges for projects led by the children to empower others against any bullies that they may find in their lives. November is a busy month and now we shall get ready for December with lots more to look forward to.

Claire Berry - Headteacher



Dementia Activity Group in Dunmow

People living with dementia can benefit from a hugely popular weekly Activity Group in Dunmow run by Essex-based charity Action for Family Carers. More than a dozen people attend the Dunmow group and a further 50 in West Essex 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.

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.

The Activity Group takes place in the Dourdan Pavilion in Dunmow on Mondays 10-12.30pm and 1-3.30pm and new members are welcome.

If you know of anyone who might benefit from joining the groups and for more information, please call 0300 770 80 90 and ask for Clare Savva or email clare.savva@affc.org.uk



DIG FOR VICTORY!

One of the key agreements at the Glasgow COP26 climate change summit was a commitment to stop global deforestation by 2030 and then begin to replenish the world's tree cover. We all need to play our part and so volunteers from Stansted Airport Watch ('SAW') have recently been planting more trees to increase the size of the SSE Wood, near Broxted Hill.

The SSE Wood was inaugurated by Terry Waite in 2004 and some 500 trees have since been planted. The Wood is on the site earmarked for a second Stansted runway and, although that threat has receded, there is now the far more serious threat posed by climate change. Once again, trees may come to our rescue.



Retired Stansted Expansion chairman
Peter Sanders at SSE Wood

This is why SAW is calling upon its 7,500 members and registered on-line supporters to support its tree-planting initiative and 'Dig for Victory' by planting a tree in their own garden or elsewhere to help win the war against climate change.

The original 'Dig for Victory' campaign was a government initiative during World War II to encourage men and women across the country to grow their own food, in order to ease shortages during the war. The current climate emergency warrants the same rallying call.

Climate change will not be halted by governments alone, especially when the aviation industry continues to add to the problem. UK aviation was responsible for emissions of 38.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in 2019 and this is expected to carry on increasing for another ten years, and still to be over thirty million tonnes in 2040.

SAW's climate change expert, Mike Young, commented: "You don't need to be a tree-hugger to help combat climate change. Trees can make a difference and if you have a garden, you can hopefully find room for at least one extra tree. That's surely not too much to ask to help protect the future of your children and your children's children."

Brian Ross

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

NEWS FROM THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

Early December 2020 seems such a long time ago. We were coming out of lockdown and expecting to be able to enjoy Christmas with family and friends. We all remember what happened to that! At the Gardens, we had our first snowfall, we were looking forward to the Balustrade being restored and we were busy planning for snowdrop Open Days in February. For us, we had one positive outcome – the Balustrade!

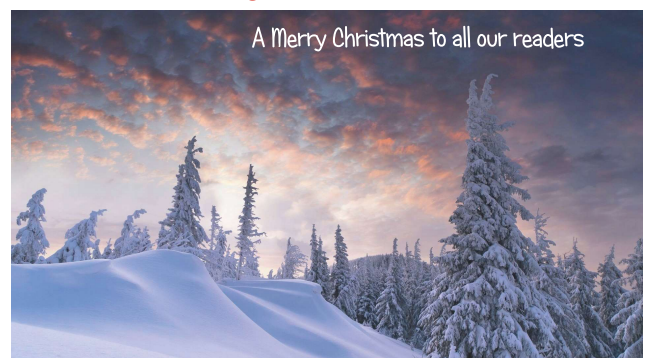


This year, we are looking forward to our first wintry views of the restored balustrade and keeping our fingers firmly crossed that in February we will not be waterlogged or in lockdown again, so that we will be able to welcome visitors for snowdrops again. This year, behind our closed gates, we did manage to plant additional snowdrops around the Gardens, so for the coming season they should be more spectacular than ever. Save the dates: Sunday 13, Thursday 17, Sunday 20, and Thursday 24 February.

We are also now taking bookings for Group visits to the Gardens in 2022. These can be arranged for groups of ten or more and include entry, a guided tour, a copy of our informative paper Guide and tea/coffee with a slice of delicious home-made cake. To arrange a group visit, contact us on our or on our enquiries line 01371 876979. Or email: groupvisits@eastonlodge.co.uk

If you arrange your group visit for a Thursday you will see our volunteers hard at work and be able to chat to them about what they love about volunteering with us, such as working outdoors in a beautiful tranquil place, getting to know a fun group of people, seeing the fruits (flowers and veg) of their labours and of course lots of tasty cake!

We take on new volunteers year-round, so why not think about joining us as a volunteer? There is more information on our website: www.eastonlodge.co.uk *Jill Goldsmith*



A Merry Christmas to all our readers



The Hundred Parishes Society

As 2021 enters its final month, we anticipate seasonal celebrations to brighten the shortest days of the year. The ancient tradition of decking our houses with garlands of fresh green holly branches reminds us of the continuity of life, bringing us cheer when the days are short.

On reaching the age of twenty, female holly trees bear red berries on branches covered with prickly shiny green leaves which can be cut to make decorative wreaths. Such wreaths featured in midwinter Celtic and Roman celebrations as symbols of good fortune, a tradition that continues thanks to the intervention of a local man, William Winstanley (1628 – 1698).

During the Commonwealth which lasted from 1649 to 1660, the Puritans under Oliver Cromwell proclaimed that it was illegal to celebrate Christmas, banning frivolities and feasting on mince pies. Winstanley, who lived in Quendon, believed in celebrating Christmas as a time for sharing joy, fun and good fortune with others. After restoration of the monarchy in 1660, using his influence as a writer, he encouraged a return to the seasonal merrymaking which we still enjoy today.



Holly trees were frequently planted near houses to ward off a lightning strike; interestingly scientific research has revealed its spiky leaves can act as miniature lightning conductors! Holly also grows in hedges or as a shrub in

woods where its berries provide nourishment for blackbirds, thrushes, and wood mice. Its dense branches provide secure nesting sites. Deer and rabbits will eat its nutritious leaves.

Today, many homeowners plant variegated forms of holly to provide interest in their gardens and they can select a mixture of foliage to make seasonal decorations.

Yew is another evergreen with red coloured fruits (loved by birds and squirrels), but as its leaves are poisonous it is less suitable for indoor decorations.



Find out more at: www.hundredparishes.org.uk
Tricia Moxey, Trustee

Birchanger Parish Council News in Brief

A new village and parish notice board at Bradley Common was recently constructed and donated by Keith Williams and installed free of charge by John Revell. The Parish Council have offered their thanks.

The public pathway between the barn conversion and the sand track has now been cleared.

Donation request from Essex & Herts Air Ambulance. A donation of £100 was agreed.

The steel fencing near the A120 roundabout is for ground survey work being undertaken. The council is concerned that after fencing was erected vehicles are now parking at the side of the road between the roundabout and the ambulance station and that they may start parking further into the village. Essex police have been informed.

The clearway scheme regarding the replacement of the A120 roundabout with crossroads and traffic light control is currently on hold pending further investigation.

Uttlesford now has a lower number of Covid sufferers. The government has allocated funding for a Domestic Violence Unit.

The planned electronic speed limitation signs near the school in Birchanger Lane, so called 'Wig Wag' signs, have been ordered and paid for by the Parish Council and are in process by Essex Highways.



Help Required For your Local Pre-School

Your local pre-school needs you! Due to Covid we have been unable to fund raise for essential resources over the past few years. This Christmas we have decided to put together a Christmas hamper that we will raffle off on the 10th December. All proceeds will go the Birchanger Butterflies Pre-school. We are selling tickets for £1 each or £4 for a strip of 5. If you would like to buy tickets, please contact me (Holly) on 07966882809.

We have been collecting donations since the middle of November for our hamper and are quickly reaching our cut off date for this. If you have something you would like to add to our hamper, donations are very kindly being collected by Cheryl and Peter Sampson at 2 Harrisons, Birchanger.

Donations to be received no later than 6th December

Many thanks to you all.

Holly Barrett

On behalf of Birchanger Butterflies Pre-school Committee



The Three Horseshoes

P. D. Tucker & P. Stapleton

Hazel End Road, Hazel End, Bps Stortford, Herts CM23 1HB

Tel: 01279 813429

Mon-Sat: 12noon - 3pm & 6 - 11pm Sunday: 12noon - 3pm

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
BAGS	Rosemary Wheatley	01279 814678
Beauty Therapist	Sarah Whiting	07887 638359
Birchanger Magazine	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Birchanger Voices	Tony Wilson	01279 813007
Birchanger Nursery	Karen Reilly	01279 810800
Bird Food	Lesley Robins	01279 812248
BSSC Club	Terry Earnshaw	01279 813441
Car Service, MOT, Gas	D. Bonney	01279 813315
Car Service - Mobile	B. K. Autos	07786 461813
Chiropodist	Julie Golden	01279 873492
Dance - Apton Studio	Maxine Williams	07854 251528
Dementia	Debbie Baker	07927 011345
Garden Services	GWB Horticulture	01799 543483
Hairdresser Men/Boys	Emma Marks	07527 227943
Holistic therapy/Reflexology	Shelley Williams	07476 279262
Landscaping Services	Mark Taylor	07941 357934
Launderette	Ian Kennedy	01279 866183
Line Dancing	Shelley	01279 864781
Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
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
Public Safety	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Speed Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
St. Mary's Church	Pam Lee	07702 171744
Tai Chi	Cait Goddard	07415 628935
The Three Horseshoes	Paul & Paula	01279 813429
The Three Willows	Mark Boden	01279 815913
Village Church Hall	Cat Roberson	07827 685741



Village Church Hall

Modern hall, superb kitchen and additional meeting room available for hire



Tearoom open every Wednesday from 2.00 pm

For bookings or further information please contact:

Manager: Cat Roberson

Telephone: 07827685741

Email: birchangerhall@gmail.com

St. Mary's Church



Church services

5 th December	11.15 am Matins with Pam Lee
12 th December	11.15 am Communion with Revd Helen
17 th December	7.00 pm evening Carol Service
19 th December	11.15 am Family Service with Hugh Mascetti
25 th December	11.15 am Christmas Communion with Revd Colin
26 th December	No service

Church News

Well, the year is rapidly coming to a close and what a difficult year it has been. Covid, of course, has played a major part and has meant that for much of the year the church has had to close its doors, just like any other organisation. Fortunately, we have not lost any member of our small congregation to Covid and due to their unfailing support, the financial impact on our church has been minimal. Others have not been so lucky.

Recent discussions about the future of parish churches have disclosed 2,000 small churches such as ours have closed due to declining attendance, spiralling costs, and reduced resources. A further 600 are in difficulty and in danger of closure. Questions are being asked as to what should be done. Should these buildings be sold for development? If they are to be kept, who should pay for their upkeep? Nowadays very few young people feel the need to attend church and there is a decline in the numbers of older people coming to church. The church is seen by many as being in decline and unnecessary to modern day living. So, what are we to do?

Here in Birchanger we are fortunate to have the financial support generated by the village church hall. That income together with generous donations from a dozen or so families who do regularly attend our church services has meant that we have been able to meet all of our regular liabilities whilst at the same time keeping both the church and hall in good repair. We thank all of our supporters for their generosity and hope that over the Christmas season and into the New Year some of you will make time to visit our church.

Future Events

Tuesday 7th December at 10.30am - Christmas Coffee Morning at Moorswood

Friday 17th December at 7pm - Evening Carol service with Choir

July 2022 Flower Festival weekend

Prayer for the Month Ahead

Gracious God

Help us not to just hear the message of Christ's birth but to make it our own.

To meet Him afresh, responding to His grace and welcoming Him into our lives.

May we recognise what He means for us and for all - what you accomplished through His life, death, and resurrection and what you continue to accomplish in countless human hearts.

Grant that the child of Bethlehem, the crucified saviour and risen Lord may be born in each of us today and that we will walk with Him to our journey's end.

Amen

Pam Lee (Church Warden)

Tel: 07702 171744

pam.mark2@btinternet.com

Village Church Hall



For information and bookings contact:
Manager: Cat Roberson
Telephone: 07827685741
Email: birchangerhall@gmail.com

THE THREE WILLOWS



Fine dining & good beers. Children and dogs welcome. Bookings: 01279 815913
 Monday to Friday: 12 to 3pm & 5 to 11pm
 Saturday: 12 to 11pm Sunday: 12 to 6pm

B.K.AUTO'S

Fully Qualified And Insured
 Mobile Mechanic

Located within Birchanger,
 all makes and models serviced
 and repaired, including
 4x4 & commercials



Contact: Ben
07786461813

D. Bonney & Sons



MOT Testing - Servicing - Diagnostic
 Mechanical Repairs
 Selection of New and Used Cars

Yew Tree Corner, Manuden
 Ring Malc or Niel on
 01279 813315 or 01279 815946

State Registered Chiropodist

Mrs. Julie Golden S.R.Ch.
Home Visiting Practice

Est 1994
 Tel: 01279 873492
 Mob: 07916075451
 Dunmow Road
 Takeley CM22 6SH

Painting & Decorating



Bring new life to
 your home
 Interior - Exterior
 General
 Maintenance
 No job too small

David Debnam
 Tel: 01279 815214 Mob: 07973861268

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Therese of Lisieux
 High Lane, Stansted CM24 8LQ

www.sttheresasstansted.org
<https://www.facebook.com/StTheresaStansted>

Priest Father Lee Bennett
 Tel: 01279 814349
 Email: frleebennett@dioceseofbrentwood.org



WASH & IRON SERVICE
 CLOTHES - BEDDING - DUVETS

Open Mon - Fri 9.00 am - 4.00 pm
 Sat - Sun 9.00 am - 6.00 pm

Hockerill Lights, Bishop's Stortford
 Large car park at rear
Tel: 01279 866183



Aerial Satellite AV Security

- Aerial Installations
- Sky Installations & Subscriptions
- CCTV & Security Alarms
- Freesat Installations & Receivers
- Audio Visual Installations
- Multiroom Music & TV Distribution
- Wireless & Wired Networks
- TV Wall Mounting Services
- Family Run Business



01279 656 983 - 0800 587 2556

Unit 1, Suite 1 Peak Business Centre, Woodside Industrial Estate, Bishops Stortford CM23 5RG

Wireless Security



Intruder alarms have never been so
 simple to install,
 operate, maintain and clean.

Mediacoms uses the latest
 technology to keep you & your
 property secure.

YOUR HOME AND COMMERCIAL SECURITY INSTALLER
 ALARMS CCTV DOOR ENTRY GATE AUTOMATION

www.mediacomms.co.uk

info@mediacomms.co.uk



Perfectly Pampered

Complementary & Holistic Therapies
 By Shelley Williams MGHT

07476 279262

Birchanger CM23 5QT

The natural approach to the wellbeing of
 women, focusing on relaxation, improving
 sleep, relieving stress, fatigue and anxiety
 through reflexology, facial and body massage
 therapies.

MGHT Accredited & Insured



Friendly, Professional & Reliable
 Sustainable Garden Services Provider
 Gardening, Landscapes & Tree Works

Tel: 01799 543483 Mob: 07866 752713

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| One off Garden Tidies | Regular Garden Maintenance |
| Hard & Soft Landscaping | Tree Pruning, Felling & Reductions |
| Hedge Cutting & Trimming | Fencing & Timber Structures |
| Advice & Planning | Traditional Countryside Crafts |
| Planting and Plant Sourcing | Leaf & Snow Clearance |
| Log Splitter & Operator Hire | Soil, Log & Aggregate Delivery |
| Chipper & Operator Hire | |

Free No Obligation Quotes
www.gwbhorticulture.co.uk

The Birchanger Village Magazine is published on behalf of the people of Birchanger and distributed free to 450 households in Birchanger. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, the magazine or any organisations or institutions represented. Material sent to the editor will generally be printed as received providing it is considered suitable by the magazine team. The editor reserves the right to edit content if considered unsuitable or where insufficient space is available. All material should be submitted by the 16th of the month to be published the following month.

Printers: Keeley & Lowe Tel: 020 7729 3350 - Email: info@keeleylowe.com

Editor: Peter Sampson Tel: 0781 7904333 Email: magazine@birchanger.com

Chairman: Elizabeth Godwin.

Treasurer: Ken Wheatley.