



Birchanger Village Magazine

January 2021

Issue 216



A Beautiful Happy New Year

Birchanger has never looked so good. The Christmas lights of 2020 were utterly amazing. Beautiful designs, fantastic colour combinations, every house with a different colour scheme, all of which brought people out nightly from miles around to see the spectacular show. Thank you everyone who contributed in their own and very individual ways.

Displays don't just happen. They require designing, planning and purchasing of the lights in the various colours. They may need a support



First Place



Elizabeth Godwin turning on the club Christmas tree lights

structure and require hours hanging from ladders, not always without incident either, and the weather certainly didn't help.

Selecting the winner was incredibly hard. Coronavirus meant there could be no public voting this year and so a small team of individuals was appointed to choose the winner. Each individual went all over Birchanger making his or her own individual choices based on a point system. The team then added the points together to find the top three and ranking them in first second and third place.

There were so many excellent displays to choose from that finding a winner was really difficult for the team. Congratulations go to our excellent winners but also to everyone else who made the effort and put up their lights in Birchanger. Thank you all for your own individual parts in this. You collectively turned a Christmas which threatened to be a Covid washout into a memorable experience to be remembered for years to come, with apologies to those who were stuck in the nightly traffic jam of spectators.

And The Winners Were

1st Place: Chris Emery of Centuries Birchanger Ln.

2nd Place: David and Christine at 238 Birchanger Lane

3rd Place: Paul and Lisa at 253 Birchanger Ln. (See Page 6)



Second Place



Editors Letter Box

census 2021

A census has taken place in England every ten years since 1801 (with the exception of 1941). A census gathers information about our society so that appropriate services can be put in place for everyone to enjoy now and in the future.

Fans of TV programmes such as “Who Do You Think You Are” will know the value of historic census data to family historians and genealogists, but data from the census impacts our lives every day, often without us even realising it.

Did you know that water companies use census data to anticipate peak water demand? Or that the NHS uses census data to plan a wide range of services such as hospitals and GP surgeries, mobile chiropodists and home support? Everything from schools to care home places are planned using census data to make sure that the needs of all age groups are met.

Every aspect of our lives is impacted by the census, so it is vital that everyone participates to ensure the best possible understanding of the structure and needs of our society. By taking part, you can make sure that your community is represented and gets its share of public and other funding to ensure the provision of services now and in the future.

The next official census date is Sunday 21st March 2021, but Census 2021 will be the first time that everyone will be able to complete the census online at any time from the beginning of March 2021.

You will receive a letter with your unique access code and will be able to complete the census online using any device. Help will be available if you need it by phone, email or text. You will also be able to use web-chat or social media, or drop into a Covid-compliant Census Support Centre. Guidance will be available in a range of languages and accessible formats, and the paper option will still be available if needed.

The census is run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which operates completely independently of government and of any private sector interests. All information submitted for the census is stored securely and anonymised. No personal data is ever sold nor is it shared with any other government department. Information from the census is only released after 100 years when your descendants may be tracing their own family history.

Please make sure that you support your community by participating in Census 2021.
For more information go to <https://census.gov.uk/> or on social media @Census2021.

Bin Collections for New Year

There will be no bin collections made during the week of Christmas (week beginning 21st December). The schedule will then move so that collections of the green-lidded recycling bin and food caddy can be made in the week following Christmas (from Tuesday 29th December). However, there will not be any bins collected on New Year's Day, with collections instead being made on Saturday 2nd January 2021.

The revised schedule means recyclable waste will be removed in the week immediately after Christmas. If residents find their recycling bin gets full before their collection date, they can use a plastic bag (not black bags) or a cardboard box for their extra recycling – these can be placed out next to the recycling bin ready for collection.

Collections of the black-lidded bin will resume in the week beginning 4th January.

Residents can stay up to date with recycling and bin collection news by subscribing to the e-newsletter service via www.uttlesford.gov.uk/keepmeposted, or by following the council on Facebook or Twitter (search @UttlesfordDC).

For more information about recycling, reducing, or reusing waste, or to see the recycling centre opening times over Christmas and New Year, visit www.loveessex.org.

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 Harrisons, Birchanger

VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin

A Dog is for Life Not Just for Christmas

We never intended to have a dog for Christmas but that is the way it turned out in a year which has been full of surprises. Certainly not all to be welcomed. Covid-19 was all over the UK, which brought us self-isolation, lockdown, and a very different Christmas for many. Unfortunately, many of us know somebody who will not see 2021 because of this virus.

It was in the middle of the first lockdown when I had a very unusual call from a film company asking me if I was looking for a dog. I couldn't say I wasn't because I had been thinking of getting a new dog, but the search had slowed down due to the pandemic and put-on hold during the lockdown. I had actively looked for a kitten for my granddaughter earlier in the year which had been successful but I had not found a dog. In fact, I thought the re-homing centres were all closed. The film company offered to help me find a dog if we agreed to being filmed while we did it. I thought why not! After all, we had not had any success thus far!

The process turned out to be exhausting and three visits later we still did not have a dog. The first visit consisted of a long round of interviews, firstly an interview with the film company, then another with the animal shelter and a final interview and feedback with the film company all in front of the cameras. Then there was a further day of filming at the shelter where we finally got to meet a dog. It was a beagle and not quite the small dog I had requested. He was so strong, he pulled me into a flowerbed and we both had difficulty holding the dog so sadly we had to say no to him. I felt guilty for days afterwards. Finally, on the third trip we finally met our perfect dog. This time the animal shelter had taken everything we asked for on board. A lovely little white Jack Russell was brought in and it was a yes at first sight. Even then, adopting him would not be totally straightforward. The dog had to be neutered and checked by a vet, inoculated and checked again. All understandable, but at that point nothing seemed certain, in fact quite the reverse.

We fell for the usual collection of brand-new squeaky toys which she subsequently ignored and we bought a brand-new bed which she loved. Even without the right food the process was not exactly cheap. All I can think is that this had better work out for all of us although so far so good.

Fraudsters Hit 2021: With a Range of New Tricks

It might have been Christmas but that did not stop a certain group of thoroughly nasty individuals from hitting out at the most vulnerable as well as those who consider themselves fairly savvy in the financial world. It seems none of us are safe. Lately they have been hitting PayPal accounts. They have been sending out a lot of emails which have cost a great many people very dearly.

Basically, the fraud starts with an email from an address you don't know. Opening this email could result in the eventual access to your private information, so if you receive an email from an address you do not recognise, don't open it and delete it at once. If the mailer was genuine, they will find another way of contacting you. If you choose not to delete the email, then you must verify it first. PayPal uses first and last names or business names. It will never ask you for your password, bank account or credit details in an email. You can forward suspicious emails without opening them to spoof@paypal.co.uk

It is a matter of common sense, be suspicious of all unsolicited offers and deals that appear to be exceptional. Use an accredited financial adviser if you would like your money to work harder for you. It will cost you but nothing like as much as being scammed. Remember that glossy websites may not be all they seem to be. Seek advice first before you part with your money.

Oil Tank Thieves Love This Time of Year

Many people who rely on oil central heating have tried to start the cold weather season with a full tank of oil. The thieves count on that too and with long dark nights often enjoy rich pickings in the winter months. The unwary assume their tanks will function as normal and the first they know of any problem is when the oil runs dry.

If you haven't got one, fit an oil tank lock and security alarm. Make sure your gates are locked and install security lights and/or CCTV cameras. The thieves are known to hit a specific area and empty as many tanks as they can find within that area, usually when the householders are sound asleep.



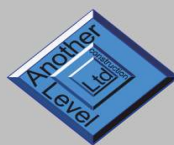
Birchanger All Girls Society

The 'BAGS' regret that due to the effect of corona virus, all future meetings are cancelled until further notice.

For further details telephone:

Olivia: 07568 574703

Rosemary: 01279 814678



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Getting Back Your Waistline

January is always the month of the cold hard reckoning. People feel the need to have a clear out of all the cupboards, start a dry January, go on a diet and clean the house, all at the same time. It happens every year to a good many of us. The papers are full of this or that diet or the latest celebrity proclaiming that it is easy to keep your figure and everyone could look like them while they promote a diet they certainly did not invent and are unlikely ever to try. But most of us survey the post Christmas wreckage in all the areas of our lives and just get on with it.

There is one very easy way to lose the pounds and that is to try reading the labels on the packets of food you buy and you will be shocked at just how much sugar they contain. Before you know it, you have had a massive sugar intake in just one meal. Read the packet as even in very ordinary foods the sugar content is shocking as well as totally unnecessary. Don't make the mistakes of swapping glucose for fructose. Fructose stops the brain's ability to tell you when you feel full. Just leaving all the processed goods on the shelves would save an awful lot of calories. Those tempting desserts, ice cream or sweet coffee really pile on the pounds. Diet drinks stimulate your appetite. Just what you don't need when you are trying to lose the pounds. Try fresh fruit instead. The strange thing is, the more you cut out sugar the less you crave it! You feel better too.

A New Way of Shopping

Have you heard of Click it Local? This is the way to access the smaller shops when you are not going out to buy items either to collect through click and collect for £1 or through home delivery which costs £3. The service is easily accessed online either through the council site or by www.clickitlocal.co.uk and putting in your post code. From there you can access all the participating small shops in Dunmow and Saffron Walden. Worth giving it a go to support local businesses and a good way to find that elusive item or maybe a treat without the leg work. When I looked, there were a lot of familiar shops in the scheme and you can view the goods online.

Cold, Bleak January

For many, January is the hardest month of the year and it is probably worse for many of us this time round. There seems no end to the long dark nights. You worry about the cost of keeping warm and it seems as if you see no one else all day.

There is no doubt that for the elderly and anyone with a health condition, keeping warm is vital. Perhaps your system is old and inefficient, but you believe that any replacement would be too costly and year on year you just make do. But there are people out there who can help and it is also quite possible that you are unaware of any benefits which you are entitled to. There is a surprising amount out there for you. If you do need help yourself or you know somebody who does, call 03333 408 218. The District Council, through a Green Homes Grant, can help with insulation, including

solid wall homes, roof and very much more. They are also experts in grant funding and you will gain a warmer home at the lowest possible cost through UDC Green Homes Grant Scheme. To find out more and help with your heating problems call UDC on 01799 510 511 or Arran Services on 0800 5877795. Every home is different and there is a great deal of help available for your particular home at grant assisted prices.

Help with Financial Difficulties

If you need support with your business and need to find out what might be available to you by way of financial support, call the council on 01799 510 510. Many businesses have built up large debts in the last few months, and post-Christmas is always a bad time when you regret the money you spent beforehand. It had all seemed fine at the time. You can also find Debt Counselling available through the CAB or the National Debt Website.

Have You Got a Smoke Alarm?

Before Christmas, the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service visited Birchanger and other localities checking if residents had up-to-date smoke alarms. This was a good example of working in the community to help to ensure the safety of all. If you hadn't got a fire alarm they would supply and fit one or more free of charge.



There is no doubt that smoke alarms save lives but they must be checked regularly and replaced every 10 years. The fire officers called on a weekday so some of you may have been out but if you want your smoke

alarms checked or changed you can contact Essex County Fire & Rescue Service on 0300 303 0088. It is also a good idea to put an alarm in the loft where many fires start from deteriorating or old wiring. You might think you won't hear it, but trust me, you will.



Let's Stop the Bullying

We all know and have probably experienced bullying at school at some time or another, but it is firmly rooted in the community and the workplace.

In all ranks of society, the lives of many of the victims are made an utter misery because of it. November's Anti Bullying Week took the message to schoolchildren but now it is more than time that the rest of society adjusted their behaviour as well in every walk of life. We just need to stop and think about how we treat others. Most of the time we have no idea we are doing it, but it is certainly not socially acceptable at any level, at work, on social media, in the boardroom or elsewhere.



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Beware of vaccination scams

With the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine recently, residents are warned of criminals seeking to exploit the pandemic.

Fake Text Messages & Calls

Basildon has been one of the worst affected areas in Essex for Coronavirus and as a result, scammers have been targeting residents with fake text messages. Essex Trading Standards have warned that the messages asks residents to click a link in order to book their vaccination, before proceeding to take personal details and payment requests. This is a scam! The Covid-19 vaccination is free, and you will never be asked for payment.



In other parts of the country, people have also received phone calls to book non-existent 'vaccination appointments'. They are asked to confirm their booking by pressing a number on their phone which results in them being billed by their provider.

Phishing scams continue to circulate, many now claiming to offer 'VIP' vaccination tickets that will allegedly put people at the head of the vaccination queue - for a price. Similar to the scams that have been seen throughout the pandemic, they will often ask you to click on a link or provide personal/banking details to pay for the ticket. Remember, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Online Shopping Fraud Increasing

Reports of online shopping fraud have surged by 30% over the pandemic as many of us continue to shop online in light of current restrictions. Figures from Action Fraud show that criminals conned 17,407 shoppers out of almost £13.5 million over the Christmas period last year, an increase of over 20% when compared to the same period in 2018. Action Fraud is warning the public to take extra care when shopping online, ahead of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, as shoppers search for bargains and gifts for loved ones in the run up to Christmas.

Tips to shop online securely this festive season

Making a purchase from an online store you haven't used before? Carry out some research first or ask a friend or family member if they have used the site and about their experiences before completing the purchase.

Only create an account if necessary or to save you effort if you are going to use that site a lot in the future. Be cautious if the website asks you for details that are not required for your purchase, such as your mother's maiden name or the name of your primary school.

If you decide to go ahead with the purchase, ensure that the webpage where you enter your payment details is secure (website address

starts with "https"). Using a credit card to pay online also means that should the worst happen, and your payment details are compromised, your main bank account won't be directly affected.

Some of the messages you receive about amazing offers may contain links to fake websites. Not all links are bad, but if you are unsure, don't use the link – go separately to the website. Report any suspicious emails you receive by forwarding them to: report@phishing.gov.uk You can also report suspicious text messages by forwarding them to 7726. For more information about how to shop online securely, please visit: actionfraud.police.uk/shoponlinesafely

Watch Out The Dog Thieves are About

Due to people staying at home or suffering from loneliness during the pandemic, the purchase of pets and their cost has risen sharply over the last year, making it worthwhile for thieves to steal your family's best friend! However, there are some basic actions that you can follow to prevent this.

Identification

Ensure your dog is microchipped and that the details on the chip reflect that you are the owner. Always keep these up-to-date, particularly if you move to a new house. Cats should also be microchipped. Microchipping helps reunite pets with their owners very quickly. Do not put your dog's name on their collar as it is then easy for someone to call your dog away from you. Just put your mobile phone number on there so that if your pet does get lost someone can call you to let you know they have them.

At Home

Keep dogs inside your home and when going out, set the alarm if fitted and leave radio or TV on as per your normal burglary prevention. If it is not possible to keep your dogs in at night, ensure they are locked in a secure kennel with security lights and alarms fitted. If you are letting your dog out into the garden (even during the day) never leave them unattended at any time and ensure your garden is secure with fencing etc. Fit motion sensor lights in your garden to add to your security. This way you can see where your dog is at any time and it makes you aware of any unwanted intruders.

On A Walk

Always bring your mobile phone when you are walking your dog. If you feel that you are threatened in any way, make your way to the nearest house or if too far away ring 999. If you can, get information that can be passed onto the police but do not put yourself at risk. Alternate the times you walk your dog. If possible, set up a time with someone else who has a dog who could walk with you. If possible, carry a personal alarm with you.

Christmas Lights Awards Given at the Club

Chris Emery of 'Centuries' Birchanger lane won 1st Place this year and came to the club to grab the cup. 2nd Place went to David and Christine at 238 Birchanger Lane and 3rd Place was awarded to Paul and Lisa at 253 Birchanger Lane. Elizabeth Godwin can be seen here announcing the winners. Elizabeth also made a special mention of Mick McGann at 313 Birchanger Lane for building a special and personal Birchanger light message display.



The Light Fantastic



Third Place (seen on the left)





Your Club Needs You!



Subscriptions for 2021 are now due Full Members Renewal £20

It is that time again and after a difficult 2020 for our Club, 2021 looks to be even more challenging. Whilst we wish all our members a happy and hopefully prosperous new year, we have to report that the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic has really exacerbated the club's financial situation. The Covid-19 isolation and lockdown rules over the past 9 months have seriously reduced our income to an unsustainable level.

Thankfully, the club has secured a Government loan which should help mitigate some of the worst affects but we still need the financial support of our members. It is more important than ever that you pay your annual subscription as soon as possible this year. The club is also taking the unprecedented action in asking both full and life members for donations of any amount over and above the annual fee.

Membership renewals or donations can be made online on the clubs website; <https://www.birchangerclub.com/membership-renewal>, by post with enclosed cheque, or over the bar at the club.

Current Opening Times: Friday 17:00 to 23:00 - Saturday 12:00 to 23:00 - Sunday 12:00 to 22:00

Christmas Opening times:

Thursday	24th	Christmas Eve	12:00 midday to 23:00 last orders at 22:00
Friday	25th	Christmas Day	Closed
Saturday	26th	Boxing Day	12:00 midday to 20:00 includes our traditional Whisky/ Bottle Draw
Sunday	27th	Open	14:00 to 23:00 last orders 22:00
Monday	28th	Closed.	

Takeaway Food will continue to be offered over the weekends. Just call Terry on 01279 813441 to order.

Tier 2 rules apply. Booking is advised to avoid disappointment, as there is limited capacity. We are regrettably unable to serve patrons and members who live in tier 3 as this will put our trading licence at risk. Tickets for the Whisky/ Bottle Draw are £1 each and available at the bar until the Draw on Dec 26th.

The above information is correct at time of printing but could change depending on changes to the current Covid-19 rules and regulations.

The club wishes to thank all of its patrons and members for their continued support and wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy new year. Enjoy the season's festivities with your family and most of all, stay safe.





Birchanger Primary School

During this difficult year, the staff at our school have worked hard to combine keeping the children safe whilst marking the usual seasonal events.

In November we marked Remembrance Day at school. The older children spent time outside at 11am on the 11th of November so that we could hear the church bells ring. Later in the month, we took part in the Children in Need event with our 'Bad Hair Day'. During the day, the children shared their creativity with a wide range of crazy styles that brought a smile to everyone's face and whilst we were laughing, we raised money for an amazing cause.

Also, in November we marked anti-bullying week. This is a very important week which is important to our children, and through our learning we found out about the anti-bullying ambassadors that are trained by the Diana Charity. The children built on this learning recently as they have worked together to create a new display for our school entrance.

Now that we are in December, the school has embraced Christmas. Unfortunately, the school was closed at the start of the month which delayed some of our events. However, once we returned, we were able to make a start as we decorated our Christmas tree that had been donated to us by a local scaffolding firm.



At the start of the last week, the children had a great time taking part in our 'Santa Dash' where we combined wearing Christmas jumpers with 'make a mile' around our playground to work on our fitness. This was followed by our Christmas lunch when Mrs McArthur, our catering manager, made sure that the children marked the festive period with a delicious meal.

We had to make a few small changes to our traditional event in order to be Covid-safe but that didn't stop our children having a wonderful time as they were served a roast turkey dinner by the staff. To give you an idea of how wonderful it was, Alex from year 5 said, "the food wasn't good, it was heavenly"!



The final Christmas event for 2020 was our nativity and the children in our youngest classes worked hard to learn their lines that tell the traditional Christmas story. The Covid restrictions meant that we were not able to have an audience and it limited the amount of singing that the children could do. However, we found different ways to perform. The children learned to sign to songs and the families were able to join us virtually though a zoom link.

As our autumn term comes to an end may we take this opportunity to wish you all a very safe and happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Claire Berry, Headteacher



AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR

Most of us will say good riddance to 2020. Some 70,000 of our fellow citizens will have died from Covid-19 in 2020 and that will be the lasting memory for most of us. The pandemic has also caused many local job losses, periodically closed our local village pub and club and taken Stansted Airport back almost 20 years to an annual throughput of less than 8 million passengers.

This prompts an interesting comparison. Airports and the hospitality industry have both been devastated by the current pandemic and a recent poll asked people which of these they missed most: not being able to go on holiday or not being able to visit the local pub? Those who responded voted hands down for the local pub. Three cheers for that! A recent Financial Times article helps explain:

"Where else but at the bar of their local can a bishop discuss the news with a local groundworker? Where else will someone new to a town get recruited to the Sunday five-a-side football team? Where else will an unofficial village "mayor" be elected? Pubs are our truly democratic spaces, where we meet and joke and sometimes even listen to each other. You cannot hate a man who gets his round in, however much you may despise his views on Brexit."



Turning to more serious matters, the Stansted Airport Public Inquiry starts on January 12th at the Radisson Blu Hotel. SSE will be presenting a mountain of technical evidence but it is also vital for the Inquiry to hear the views of local residents. Your contribution needn't be lengthy or complicated. A personal statement from a local resident can be far more powerful than an expert consultant's report. For example, you could provide a local perspective which the Inspectors might not otherwise have been able to hear.

You can give your evidence via video link rather than appear in person. Applications to speak should be emailed to info@programmeofficers.co.uk who will then advise the arrangements.

Best regards for the new year - Brian Ross

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

November at the Gardens was very busy, and December is shaping up to be too, with lots of projects to complete to restore the Gardens and improve them for the coming season. As usual we have our fingers firmly crossed that our snowdrops will be at their spectacular best for our open days on the 14th and 21st February 2021. Every year they spread a bit more and we give them a helping hand too, breaking up the clumps and replanting them to colonise new areas. And we have added more narcissi and tulips for visitors to enjoy in March and April.

In January we hope to see completion of the balusters for the restoration of the lilypond balustrade in March.



We have been clearing a new pathway in the lime wood, which will give visitors a fresh perspective on the daffodils there. And in December we are aiming to put a new path into the woodland next to the walled kitchen garden too. Clearing the nettles and undergrowth there should allow other more interesting plants to get established.

There is so much to look forward to. For details of snowdrop open days, go to our website www.eastonlodge.co.uk. It is still not too late to support our balustrade restoration project – details can be found on the website Restoration page: www.eastonlodge.co.uk/the-gardens/restoration.

Happy New Year - Jill Goldsmith

Community Response Hub

The Uttlesford Community Response Hub continues to help people in the community who need it, particularly those who are finding themselves having to return to self-isolation.

The number 03333 408 218 is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm. or email: communityresponse@uttlesford.gov.uk.

For Local help with shopping or collecting prescriptions etc., please call Peter Sampson on 07817904333 or email: peter.sampson@talktalk.net



The Hundred Parishes Society

Pubs – The Heart of England

The local pub has long been a focal point of the community. Samuel Pepys in his diary described the pub as “the heart of England”. Beer was once much safer to drink than contaminated water.

Many of our local pubs are centuries old, built when most of the population were illiterate. They had distinctive names and simple signs to identify them. As early as 1393 Richard II required landlords to erect signs so that ale houses were clearly visible to his inspectors, who judged the quality of the ale. Nowadays, not all have signs but there are many interesting names.

The Saracen’s Head in Great Dunmow, opposite the marketplace, is a 16th-century coaching inn. A Saracen was an Arab Muslim who in the Middle Ages fought against Christians for control of The Holy Land.



The Blind Fiddler in Anstey takes its name from a tale of George the blind fiddler who for a bet entered a tunnel said to run from a pit to the castle mound a mile away. He was accompanied by his dog. A scream was heard, the dog reappeared singed from head to tail, but George was never seen again!



In Bartlow, The Three Hills dates from around 1800 AD and is named after the parish’s giant Roman burial mounds which also feature on the village sign.



The Sword Inn Hand at Westmill takes its name from the coat of arms of the Greg family who once lived in the parish and were generous benefactors. It has an unusual and distinctive new sign.



Let’s hope that we can soon all return to fully enjoying the hospitality of our local hostleries. Each of those mentioned here can be found on one of the walks described on the Society’s website. (See below)

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

Ken McDonald, Secretary



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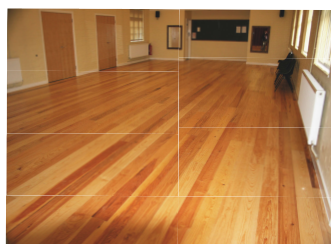
Village Services and Activities

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
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
Builders - Another Level	Matt Marks	01279 814273
BSSC Club	Steve Hopkins	01279 813441
Car Service	D. Bonney	01279 813315
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	01279 814273
Holistic Therapist	Shelley Williams	07476 279262
Landscaping Services	Mark Taylor	07941 357934
Laundrette	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
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St. Mary's Church	Pam Lee	07702 171744
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Village Church Hall



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Administrator - Barbora Dragoskova Tel. 01279 815243

Email st.johns.church@btinternet.com

Key Holder - Cat Roberson Tel. 07475092658

Email: stmaryschurch.birchanger@gmail.com

St. Mary's Church News



Church Services - 11.15 am

3 rd Jan	11.15 am Matins - Pam Lee
10 th Jan	11.15 am Holy Communion - Revd Jeff Hayward
17 th Jan	11.15 am Family Service - Peter Odrich
24 th Jan	11.15 am Holy Communion - Revd Helen Flack
31 st Jan	09.30 am Holy Communion Joint Benefice at St Johns, Stansted
31 st Jan	11.15 am Matins at St Mary's - Pam Lee

Church News

What a roller coaster of a year we have all had. One minute we at St Mary's were planning for Paul's retirement and the next, the church was closed because of the pandemic. Then the church reopened only to have services suspended for a month. The hall has also been closed throughout the summer and we had to cancel all of our fund-raising events including coffee mornings, lunches, the fashion show, tearoom and Christmas Bazaar.

As you can imagine all of this upheaval has had a devastating effect on church finances. At one point the church was perilously close to not having the funds to meet regular monthly expenses and it is only because of the generosity of our small loyal congregation and a few residents that we have been able to navigate our way through essential repairs and expenses. Peter Sampson kindly resolved the problem with our PA system and my son sorted out the heating problem. Both gave generously of their time and expertise freely. A huge thank you to you all. The financial situation is still a difficult one but things are beginning to improve. You can help by either attending one of our services or making a donation, whichever you prefer.

Now, we are back enjoying regular Sunday services but have missed out on our annual carol service when we usually welcome so many villagers into church. Let us hope that things get back to something close to normal in the New Year.

The Rector left us at the end of November and the process of appointing his replacement is already under way. Because of financial constraints and lack of available clergy we shall be moving into a united benefice that will not only include Stansted and Farnham but also Takeley and Little Canfield. In the meantime, services will continue to be led by members of our congregation guided by our curate, Revd Helen Flack plus clergy and lay readers from around the deanery.

The Parochial Church Council has responsibility for the wellbeing and upkeep of St Mary's and the church hall. When those responsibilities are shared, they are not onerous but at the moment volunteers seem thin on the ground. If you are interested in getting involved please speak to Pam Lee, Sue Warr or Rosemary Saward.

Finally, this Christmas, when you have done all your celebrating and are packing away your decorations and trimmings for another year, how about starting (or restarting) your journey with Christ, watch him grow, listen to what he has to say and get to know him. You may just find that the best gift you receive this Christmas is that Jesus has quietly entered into your life enriching it beyond measure.

Subject to Covid-19 rules, the Tearoom will reopen at 2pm on 6th January. Come along and enjoy homemade cakes and a natter.

Prayer for the Month

May the Lord enter into your heart and your home
And may he bring you and your family peace today and through the year ahead

Pam Lee (Church Warden)

Tel: 07702 171744

pam.mark2@btinternet.com

Village Church Hall



For information and bookings contact;

Barbora Dragoskova 01279 815243
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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.

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