



Birchanger Village Magazine

January 2025

Issue 264



Millennium Tree Vandalised



The 4th December is a day to remember. This was the day that someone decided for their own selfish reasons to vandalise Birchanger's Millennium Tree on the village green.

Three major branches were cut off on one side using a chain saw. This was done unsympathetically, without permission and with no consideration for the look of the tree. No professional tree arborist used here!

It is reported that the work was ordered by the same person who applied for planning

permission in March 2024 to build 9 houses on the equestrian field near the stables behind and between a row of houses on Birchanger Lane and the 'sand track, public footpath 16/26.

The same crew cut back a resident's hedge adjacent to the village green, again without discussion or permission. Police were called out but arrived too late to stop the vandalism. They did however manage to prevent further damage to trees and hedges close to Gower Barn.

A number of residents, including parish and district councillors at the scene tried to stop the work but were ignored quite aggressively and were endangered by falling branches when they refused to move away from the tree. Children were crying and a resident reported that he was manhandled and the crew's lorry backed into him.

Another resident stated that he thought the reason behind the mayhem was that the planning applicant wanted to build an access road over the existing public footpath and was trying to overcome Highways objections of visibility to Birchanger Lane by cutting back trees and vegetation along the path.

The incident was reported to the police by a number of residents who were at the scene, several of which have said that they are considering taking civil action for the aggressive way they were treated.

Birchanger Under Continuous Attack by Developers

But we are surrounded by Green Belt, aren't we? And isn't Green Belt meant to protect towns and villages from unscrupulous, money grabbing developers. Well, that was the case until the present government changed the rules. Now it seems Green Belt can be changed to 'Grey Belt' without local councils' input.

Birchanger is surrounded by Green Belt, which up until now has prevented our little village merging with Stansted and Bishop's Stortford. Under the new rules, we are in danger of losing our independence and will have little say, if anything, against unwanted housing estates being built on existing green spaces or farmland.

The government has described the Grey Belt as "poor quality and ugly areas" on parts of protected land, called the Green Belt. Established more than 70 years ago, the Green Belt covers about 13% of England. It was designed to limit the growth of large built-up areas, and to stop large towns merging into one another. Under the Labour government's plans, if a council's housing targets cannot be met, some existing Green Belt land will be re-designated as Grey Belt. This will free up land for the construction of new homes.

The government aims to build 1.5 million more homes in the next five years, helped by planning reforms, the release of Green Belt land and the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets for local authorities. Whilst there is no doubt new homes are necessary, must it be at the cost of destroying our green and pleasant villages?

Birchanger Green Belt Already at Risk

Currently, we have two planning applications for building on our Green Belt land: Nine houses on the equestrian paddock along the sand track behind Harrisons (Planning Application UTT/24/0642/FUL) and the conversion of the barn (Birchanger Hall Farm, Planning Application UTT/24/3011/PAQ3) into four houses, also behind Harrisons. In addition, Developers City & Country have recently published their 'vision' for 1050 houses adjacent to Tot Lane between Stansted, Birchanger and the M11, effectively joining the two villages.

Nine houses on the equestrian paddock UTT/24/0642/FUL

This application for 9 houses in the green belt in Birchanger was received by UDC on March 8, 2024, validated on March 13, 2024, with a decision date of May 8, 2024. During the last 9 months the applicant has been granted one extension after another in which to submit further information. The latest extension ran out several weeks ago, but to date no decision has been published.

Continued on Page 2.....

The applicant proposes to reach the nine houses via two footpaths. Number 15 alongside 'Gower Barn' on Birchanger Lane and number 16 alongside 'Old Cottage'. Footpath 16 can only be reached from Birchanger Lane by crossing the village green. The parish council has made it clear that it will not accept a road crossing the village green. However, despite this, the applicant has continued to cut back trees and bushes, including the Millennium Tree, causing a great deal of stress and anxiety for the residents directly involved and anger from many other villagers.

Birchanger Parish Council has sent a letter to the CEO of Uttlesford District Council, Peter Holt, stating that the parish council is unable to understand the non-determination of this application but would urge that a decision is made and published urgently.

New! Barn Conversion UTT/24/3011/PAQ3

This is the second application for the barn conversion, the previous one was rejected. The new notice for 4 houses was only published on the 2nd December which gave a very short reply date of the 23rd December. Birchanger Parish Council have since asked for an extension in order for the council and residents to submit their comments. A new date of 10th January 2025 has been agreed.

In order to defend the village boundary and the Green Belt, the current proposal needs to be opposed. Objections should be sent by email to planning@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Put "Application UTT/24/3011/PAQ3" in the subject box and then just set out in a few reasons why you consider the proposal should be rejected, for example:

The barn is on Green Belt land and lies outside the village development limits.

The proposed barn conversion would amount to "backland" development – i.e. there is no frontage onto a public road. Backland development is prohibited under the Uttlesford Local Plan other than in certain exceptional circumstances, which do not apply here.

The sand track and the narrow access lane from the Harrisons cul-de-sac are both footpaths widely used by dogwalkers and other local residents.

Vehicles accessing the four new houses would give rise to road safety concerns.

The proposal would damage the rural aspect to the south of the village and there would be a loss of amenity and adverse visual impact if housing were to be allowed in the countryside adjacent to the sand track.

Remember to include your name and address and remember also that separate emails from each member of your household will have more impact than a joint email. The closing date for objections is 10 January.

Don't Delay, Do it Now!

City & Country 'vision' for 1050 Houses between Stansted and Birchanger

This is a proposal to build 1050 houses with 50% (so called) affordable homes on the land between Stansted and Birchanger. They include an expansive public space of 57 acres of parkland, improved walking and cycling routes.

City & Country stated that they feel there is a need for more housing in the area. They are counting on the Green Belt land between Birchanger and Stansted being reclassified as Grey Belt under the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and that the site will fall into the grey category.

A meeting was held on the 6th December between City & Country (Developers) and 9 representatives from Birchanger and Stansted Parish Councils. The councillors present thought the current proposal for 1050 new houses to be a scare tactic in that they would eventually come back with a proposal for hundreds fewer houses, we would all breathe a sigh of relief and agree to them. Of course, if this happened, a few years later another application could be made for more houses and eventually more Green Belt would be used. This was one of the sites put forward when UDC called for sites for the new Local Plan, but they were all refused.

C&C were challenged regarding the assertion they would include 50% affordable homes. When asked if this would include social housing (houses managed by a housing association or the district council) the response was affordable housing meant various things including 2-bedroom starter homes, joint ownership, and rental properties. C&C did not appear to be envisaging any social housing. It was pointed out that even a 2-bed home in this area would cost in the region of £400,000.

C&C say they still have many surveys to do with regard to highways, education etc., and will come back in the new year with more detailed proposals and it may be that they would reduce the proposed 1050 houses to 300/400. C&C suggested perhaps the parish councils would like to meet them again in the new year with a wish list of what they would like included in the development!

Birchanger and Stansted Councils have made it abundantly clear that they will strenuously object to this proposal in its entirety. However, as it is only a vision and proposal there is no further action that can be taken at this time.

You can search and make comments on any Planning Application online using the following link:

<https://publicaccess.uttlesford.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

By email to: planning@uttlesford.gov.uk

By Letter to: Planning, Uttlesford District Council, London Road, Saffron Walden CB11 4ER

When sending your comments by email or letter, you must include: The planning application reference number (starting UTT/) - The address of the site - Your name - Your address.

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

Christmas Lights Up Despite the Weather

After one of the stormiest Decembers in recent years it was almost impossible to put up the Christmas lights this year. But we are tough in Birchanger and despite the need for frequent repairs Birchanger people did their best and created beautiful displays which made Birchanger the place to be yet again at Christmas. A very special thank you to everyone who was part of the Big Light Up 2024. You are all winners.

Thank You

This is to everyone who came to Moorswood for coffee in December and managed to raise £222 for Prostate Cancer. Prostate Cancer is something which is afflicting too many men living in Birchanger. Many are enduring long and exhausting treatments which often need to be repeated. We don't know why this is happening or why it should be occurring in hot spots all over the country. Birchanger is one such hot spot and those who came to the coffee morning agreed that the £222 raised should be donated to prostate cancer research. There will hopefully be an Easter Coffee Morning but more about that later.

They Want to Take Away Our Countryside Again

Once again Birchanger is faced by another major proposal for 1050 new houses that will take away the land between us and Forest Hall Road and create a coalescence between Bishop's Stortford, Birchanger, and Stansted in the process. Using Weasel words, the developers told us at a local meeting that we can have housing densities which we can set ourselves.

It is very unlikely that this will happen. With a Prime Minister dead set on grabbing every bit of Green Belt land he can to provide a million and half homes ASAP, what chance have we really got when local democracy has been thrown out of the window.

Is Birchanger really the right place to put down masses of houses without the facilities to support them? Where are the schools, surgeries, roads, and transport facilities for a start? No Planning Application has been submitted as of today, it seems the developers are just testing the water. Birchanger has fought big battles before and as before we need to get ourselves organised, again.

Birchanger All Girls Society

The 'BAGS' welcome women to join them on the last Wednesday of every month at 8.00 pm in the village hall.

Next meeting:

AGM Wednesday 29th January 7.45 for 8.00 pm

bags@birchanger.com

Olivia: 07568 574703

Rosemary: 01279 814678

Liz Turner: 07473 508056

New Year's Resolutions

I never make them because by the end of January they are always broken. Actually, it was usually on day one. I didn't want to be always feeling guilty every January because I broke all my resolutions before the end of the first week. It was easier just not to make them. Or set resolutions that are not too hard to achieve. Some of us paint the house, others may try a new hairstyle, or chuck out half their wardrobe to replace it in the sales. Some of us spend time binge reading, others just sink into depression. Must avoid that if we can. This time of year, you need more than ever to try new things. New hobbies, learn a new skill, meet new people, plan your next holiday, complete the biggest jigsaw puzzle ever, knit a sweater, just enjoy the downtime. Signs of spring will be here soon.

Happy New Year.

The Police Are Getting Tougher

On Drink Driving that is. In the first week of the Christmas Drink Driving Campaign 62 people were arrested for Drink Driving. The police mean business this year more than any other year in recent times. Please take care when you do go out. Agree on a designated driver and if he does drink, some pubs have breathalysers so you can check the alcohol levels before you leave, although the breathalyser kits in the pub may not be as reliable as the ones the police use. Low alcohol and non-alcohol drinks have improved a lot in recent years, and you are not just stuck with diet Coke or lemonade anymore. We are the envy of many people who visit Birchanger. A pub and a club within walking distance for most people, how lucky are we!

Bin Collection - Christmas & New Year

The bin collection schedule will change in Uttlesford over the festive season. Collections will be as normal in the week before Christmas - which is a green-lidded recycling bin and brown food waste caddy collection week. There will be no collections on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The Tuesday, December 24 and Wednesday, December 25 collections will now be made a day earlier than usual. The usual Thursday December 26 collection will be moved to a day later on Friday December 27. The normal Friday collections will move to the Saturday. Collections during Christmas week will be for the general waste black bin and brown food caddy. No extra bags will be collected!

During New Year week, the Tuesday, December 31 collections will stay the same. However, the Wednesday, January 1, Thursday, January 2 and Friday, January 3 collections will move to one day later. Collections in New Year week will be for the green-lidded recycling bin and food caddy. Additional recycling can be placed at the side of the bins for collection, in white or clear bags or cardboard boxes. Collections will go back to the normal schedule from Tuesday, 7 January 2025.

Christmas Tree Recycling

Christmas trees for recycling can be placed in the skip provided on Saturday 11th January in Birchwood, Birchanger between 08:30 and 09:00.

Birchanger's Judith Teall Starts Up a New And Exciting Business



After a long and fulfilling career in healthcare, some 6yrs in nursing and 34yrs in pharma clinical research, the time finally came in October for a longstanding Birchanger resident to hang up her full-time working boots. For Judith Teall, retirement was not yet calling, so she decided to combine several of her passions of wildlife, nature, sustainability, and creativity, to start something new, and so Earthly Doodles was born.

So it was with much excitement that the online Print On Demand (POD) store 'Earthly Doodles' launched on 7 December, on the Shopify eCommerce platform. POD offers a means of reducing retail waste by only creating products that are required, instead of the usual guesswork involved for retailers estimating quantities (size, design, colour) and avoids complex supplier and inventory management. Products are ordered from the online store, then printed, packaged, and shipped to the customer.

Earthly Doodles offers a range of Apparel and Lifestyle products, with designs inspired by wildlife and nature. The aim is to create opportunities for families (of all types, shapes, and sizes) to coordinate across family members or across products, to support days in / days out / holidays.

One section is devoted to 'Friends of Earthly Doodles', where sports clubs or other 'families' can have their merchandise ordering hosted (the inaugural one being hoodies for the newly formed BS Padel Club, part of BSLTC - Tennis Club). Some designs carry motivational messages, some humour is inserted, and feature bold wildlife or nature focused imagery, often in bright engaging colours. Animals range from the well-known to exotic, both large and small.

As well as the featured products on sale on the website, it also contains a Blog which currently hosts 3 initial posts related to the animal kingdom, which Judith hopes will be of interest to store visitors. Her hope is that families can inspire our next generations to care about our global wildlife and the delicate ecosystems, and appreciate how important all animals are to the future of the planet and to humankind.

The Earthly Doodles store can be found here:
www.earthlydoodles.com And on Instagram: earthy_doodles

AIRPORT NEWS

STANSTED PUBLISHES NEW LONG-TERM PLAN

On 5 December Stansted Airport published its new long term development plan, setting out how it expects the airport to grow over the next 20 years.

At the heart of the plan is a projection that the airport will grow to about 50 million passengers a year by the 2040s. This compares to its present annual throughput of 30 million passengers. Importantly, Stansted expects to be able to cater for this increase in passengers without the need for a second runway and without any increase in the annual number of flights (274,000 a year).

Most local residents will breathe a sigh of relief that there are no plans for a second Stansted runway. It's hard to believe that in July 2002, more than 22 years ago, the Government proposed that there should be at least one extra runway at Stansted, and that it should be built by 2011. It was the threat of a second runway all those years ago that led to the creation of Stop Stansted Expansion campaign. It must be good news for local communities and the local environment that the airport's latest 20-year plan does not require a second runway.

Stansted Airport will continue to expand but the growth in passenger numbers can be achieved without more flights. Moreover, the new aircraft which Stansted airlines have on order, not only have more seats than the aircraft they will replace, but are also claimed to be less noisy and have lower carbon emissions.

Ryanair accounts for four out of every five Stansted passenger flights and it has recently placed an order for 300 Boeing 737 Max-10 aircraft. These have 228 seats compared to 189 seats in the Boeing 737-800 aircraft that they will replace, yet they should not look very different. The increase in the aircraft's length is from 39.5 metres to 43.8 metres.

This is not to suggest that airport expansion is a good thing but, if it is going to happen, it's far better that it happens with no extra flights, no increase in noise and emissions and no additional runway. However, there is one major aspect of Stansted Airport's long-term plan which will be far more difficult to deal with, namely the increase in road traffic generated by the increase in passenger numbers. This will be in the region of an extra 25,000 airport-related vehicle journeys every day.

Add that number to the extra traffic being generated by all the new local housebuilding and you end up with a gridlock scenario for local roads. And you think the traffic is bad today!

Happy New Year! Brian Ross

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There has been a magical feeling in the air at Preschool this last half term! We have been getting ready for Christmas, both the children and the staff are very excited.



The children have had the best time decorating the Preschool room and I must say they have done a fantastic job. They even made their own decorations to hang on our tree. Preschool would like to thank the people in the village who donated some beautiful decorations to us as after ours were ruined due to a leak in the storage shed.

The children have enjoyed walking to the village post box to post their handmade cards that they have made for their

Mummies, Daddies and Carers, they loved looking at all the beautiful lights and decorations on their way.

We have also been incorporating Christmas into our learning and had a fantastic time using our new loose parts in all areas of learning. The children have been using these in the role play area, building with them, counting and measuring with them and are even decorating our floor Christmas tree.



Carly Richards - Preschool Manager
admin@birchangerbutterflies.org.uk

Safety kit ideas for cars during the winter months by Geof Driscoll

Uttlesford is a rural district, and many residents rely on using a car to get out and about. These are some easy items you could put together to help you stay safe this winter. They may help in the event of a breakdown or bad weather.

A well-prepared winter driving kit should include: A torch and batteries. A first-aid kit. An ice scraper and de-icer.

Wellies or winter boots. A snow shovel. Screen-wash. A blanket. Jump leads. Reflective warning triangles. Sunglasses (Low Sun months). In-car phone charger – and a portable battery charger. Chocolate bar, packet of crisps and water/soft drinks and/or hot flask in case of being stranded.

In addition, the RAC recommend the following:

Fuel

It may sound obvious but ensure you have enough fuel for your journey – it is a good idea to fill-up before setting off. Cars use more fuel in heavy traffic and start/stop conditions which can be regular occurrences, especially in wintry weather. And if the weather changes and it takes longer than you expect you could encounter problems.

Oil

Check your oil level using the dip stick and top-up if necessary – check your handbook if you are unfamiliar with how to do this and to ensure you use the correct oil. Locate the oil cap with the oil can symbol on it and pour in the right amount. Make sure you replace the cap fully and be careful not to overfill as this can cause more problems.

Rubber

Check your tyre tread depth and air pressure.

Remember that well-maintained tyres are vital to give you traction and grip on icy, wet surfaces. Your car's recommended tyre pressure can be found either in your car's manual or inside the driver's door. The legal tyre tread depth for cars in the UK and Europe is 1.6mm. Check your tyre tread depth using either a tyre gauge, the marker bars on your tyre or a 20 pence coin. If you can't see the outer band of the 20p your tyres are within the legal limit. RAC recommends you check your tyres every fortnight, and before long journeys. Ideally a minimum tread depth of 3mm in icy or very wet conditions is recommended.

Wiper blades

In winter, your windscreen can get a very dirty from rain, snow, ice and road salt. Maintaining good visibility is always imperative so check your wipers are doing the job by spraying some washer fluid and checking they clean the windscreen. Then get out of the car and run your fingers along the length of the blades to check for splits. It's recommended to change wiper blades every 12 months.

Screen-wash

Make sure you top up your screen-wash with a product that is effective down to at least -15 degrees Celsius (recommended). This additive helps to keep the windscreen free of ice and dirt, particularly the winter road grime caused by road salting and gritting which can cause visibility issues, especially during the low sun months of November/December and February/March.

Coolant

Coolant (a mixture of water and antifreeze) is pumped around your engine to cool it. You should regularly check your engine coolant level and top-up if required. Remember only check this when the engine is cool otherwise you risk scalding yourself. It's not normal for coolant levels to drop suddenly, so if it does, get it checked out at a garage. You should find the coolant is between the min/max marks on the side of the tank.

Electrics

Check your lights and indicators are all working properly and replace bulbs or fuses if required. Battery problems are the reason for more RAC callouts in winter than anything else.

What's on in the village...



January 2025

JANUARY

Household Bin Collections: Bradley Common collected on Fridays. Rest of Birchanger on Thursdays. (Some exceptions)

Free Garden Waste Skip Outside the Club 15.00-16.00: Waiting for information

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

Birchanger Parish Council Meetings: Meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the church hall - **Open to the public.**

		1 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	2 Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	3 Green Bin Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	4 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: 13.00 Meat draw	5 St Mary's Church: 11.15 am Family Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
6 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	7 Garden Bin Church hall: 09.45-10.45 Ballet Apton Dance: 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	8 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	9 Black Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	10 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	11 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: 13.00 Meat draw	12 St Mary's Church: 10.45 Matins Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
13 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	14 Church hall: 09.45-10.45 Ballet Apton Dance: 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	15 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	16 Green Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	17 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	18 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: Quiz Night memory of Kevan Reid	19 St Mary's Church: 11.15 Family Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
20 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	21 Garden Bin Church hall: 09.45-10.45 Ballet Apton Dance: 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	22 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	23 Black Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	24 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	25 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: Charity Race Night for NSPCC	26 St Mary's Church: 11.15 am Holy Communion Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
27 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	28 Church hall: 09.45-10.45 Ballet Apton Dance: 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	29 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance 20.00 BAGS	30 Green Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	31 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance		



BIRCHANGER SPORTS
AND SOCIAL CLUB

WHAT'S ON AT THE CLUB

*Happy
New Year
2025*

**FROM EVERYONE AT BIRCHANGER SSC
WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR
MEMBERS AND GUESTS FOR THEIR
SUPPORT IN 2024 AND LOOK
FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL IN 2025!**

A NIGHT AT THE RACES



**CHARITY RACE NIGHT
PROCEEDS TO SUPPORT NSPCC
25th JANUARY**

QUIZ
Night

**18TH JANUARY
IN MEMORY OF
KEVAN REID**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Membership renewals are due in January

2025 subscription will be £25.00 per year.

NEW MEMBERS £30.00 for the first year.

FREE ENTERTAINMENT • SUBSIDISED DRINKS

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

We welcome new members. To join you can either complete the online application or speak to a member of staff at the Club.

For more information visit
www.birchangerclub.com



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



Winners of this year's Big Christmas Light Up



The lucky winners this year were Mark and Angeline Taylor of Birchanger Lane. Many congratulations to them and a massive thank you for everyone in Birchanger for giving such a wonderful light show. Happy New Year to all our readers, reporters and printers.



Happy New Year! The last few months of 2024 were a very busy time for UCAN. Our fundraising efforts were in full swing in November at the Henham Christmas Gift Fair. The busy day started early with the arrival of our

UCAN volunteers who came along to assist with everything from helping stallholders to unload, making much needed refreshments and manning the popular tombola stand. They were invaluable and deserve a huge thank you!

More thanks go to the Henham and Ugley Primary School Choir and the Elsenham Choir, who provided wonderful singing that really got everyone in the mood. Stallholders from Essex came to offer a wide range of tempting gifts for all. The message to "support local" this year seemed to have been heard by everyone who came along to buy their Christmas presents.

And for anyone who had been following the journey of our "Name the Soft Toy" on social media, you will be pleased to know that "William" was welcomed by his new owner at the end of the fair. A total of £3,845 was raised on the day which will help the charity continue to support residents of Uttlesford. Plans are now being discussed to hold the event again this year but, for now, a huge thank you once again for all your support.



Think Volunteering's not for you? Think again!

Not enough time?

Some of our opportunities take only an hour.

It's boring?

Tell us what you like and we'll do our best to help you find something you'll enjoy.

Difficulty getting to volunteer opportunities?

Let us see if we can help!

No experience or lack of confidence?

We will make sure you are fully supported.

Simply contact Susan, Tessa or Sophie at UCAN on 01371 404525 or email volunteer@ucan.org.uk to find out more. We'd love to hear from you!



Looking to make a difference in 2025? Then why not try volunteering! At UCAN we specialize in matching the right volunteer to the right opportunity. So if you're looking to improve your own health and wellbeing this year, then volunteering could be just what your need. Get in touch with our Volunteer Team for a no-obligation chat. Call 01371 404525 to speak to Susan, Tessa or Sophie or email volunteer@ucan.org.uk.

u3a

Stansted Mountfitchet

We're thrilled to launch the new year with two engaging events in January. On Thursday, 16th January, our General Meeting will feature an unforgettable presentation on WWII's Amiens Prison Raid. This daring RAF mission, Ramrod 564, involved low-level, precision bombing and was a significant prelude to D-Day. Guy Thomas, Denis Sharp, and Susan Sedgebeer will share this compelling story, including a firsthand account from the navigator of the second Mosquito to breach the prison's outer wall.

Following this, on Saturday, 18th January, we'll host a special seminar by Cambridge University's Professor David Norman, one of the leading voices in paleobiology. Professor Norman will present fascinating evidence supporting the theory that birds evolved from dinosaurs - a counterpoint to the ideas discussed in Mike Howgate's seminar in May 2024.

Visitors and new members are warmly welcome to join us. For details on upcoming events and how to get involved, please visit www.stansted.u3a.co.uk or call 07874 385541. Our u3a remains dedicated to lifelong learning and fostering a vibrant, welcoming community.

Susan Sedgebeer

Uttlesford submits Local Plan to Secretary of State

The Draft Uttlesford Local Plan, which will bring high quality homes, employment and infrastructure to the district over the next two decades, has been submitted for independent examination.

Uttlesford District Council submitted the plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government today (Wednesday 18 December), along with the many supporting evidence documents and more than 500 responses that were received in the latest round of public consultation held in the autumn. This is the next stage in the process leading towards adoption of the local plan.

Now the plan has been submitted, the Secretary of State will appoint a Planning Inspector to review and assess it. They will consider whether the plan has met the legal requirements and tests of 'soundness' - to be judged against national policy, including how the council has consulted, engaged and worked with neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies.

Once appointed, the Planning Inspector will set out the next steps and timetable to be followed in the examination process. The details will be published on the council's website, when known.

More information about the local plan submission documents can be found on the council's website:

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/local-plan-examination

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

Happy New Year from all of us at the Gardens of Easton Lodge. We hope you had a lovely festive season and that you had your fingers crossed for a bright, sunny, and cold January - like we had in 2023. We absolutely do not want a warm January as we had in 2024, when some primroses and violets were already in flower and we had loads of rain, followed by a wash-out snowdrop season and so many slugs and snails that the spring was blighted.

After a busy autumn, in January we will be focused on pruning the apples and pears in the walled kitchen garden. The Easton Countess always needs big treatment as it grows very fast and makes a dense tunnel over the path, however hard we cut it back. We will also prune the late summer/autumn raspberries. They were incredibly productive this last year, with huge fruit, perfect for immediate eating and contributing to our lovely jam tombola.

The canes are taking over, so we will remove some and pot them up for sale. There will no doubt also be more clearing of fallen trees and branches and still some manure shifting to do. So, we will have plenty of work to keep us warm if we are lucky and have cold weather!



Our craft-minded volunteers will also be busy through the new year, making the lovely crocheted elephants and other goods available for visitors. The winter season of talks about the gardens will be in full swing and our website will be refreshed with the planned events for 2025, starting with (hopefully) four snowdrop open days in February.

For information about group visits or talks, go to the website www.eastonlodge.co.uk Or contact us by email: enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk

Jill Goldsmith

Police Notice

Police are holding a meeting on Tuesday January 7 at The Arts Centre Dunmow, 1 Hasslers Lane, Dunmow where you can ask questions on any matter regarding policing in our area, between 7.00 pm and 8.00 pm. It is a good opportunity to discuss policing in our area and for you to raise any concerns you may have.



The Hundred Parishes Society

Like others, I have covered many miles through the patchwork of landscape in the Hundred Parishes and have often crossed intersecting footpaths, stopping to examine my map to understand why they exist and where they go.

Recently, I picked up local author Christopher Hadley's book, *The Road*, in which Hadley explores a spur of Ermine Street which connects former Roman towns at Braughing and Chesterford, carving a straight line for 13 miles through The Hundred Parishes. Hadley draws on years of archaeological and historical research. Tracing the route, he gathers lost names, locates burial mounds and tracks down archaeology in the hope of revealing two thousand years of history.

Through his words, we gain a glimpse of the civilisation that sited and constructed the road, of the people who used and maintained it and, eventually, of what happens when a road passes out of general use and the legacy it leaves behind.



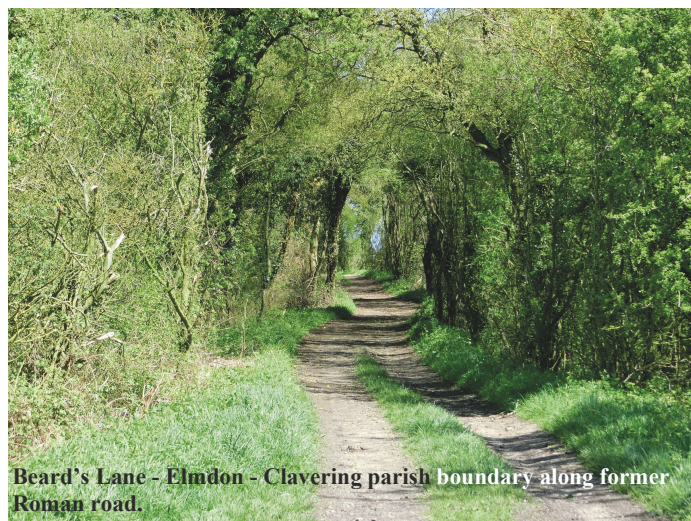
Elmdon – looking south from B1039 towards Rockell's Wood.

Much of this route can be walked still; the actual Roman road is most visible as Beards Lane where it defines straight parish boundaries, with Clavering and Arkesden to the south-east and Langley and Elmdon to the north-west.



Elmdon – looking north from Rockell's Wood towards Elmdon

In short, *The Road* is a lyrical, nostalgic, sometimes humorous and intriguing social history and travelogue which will enthrall enthusiasts of cultural and local history. After finishing this book, I find myself re-examining parish churches, wondering if the red, small bricks in the tower are Tudor in origin or perhaps pillaged from a lost Roman storehouse.



Beard's Lane - Elmdon - Clavering parish boundary along former Roman road.

The highway which is the focus of this book is one of several local routes with Roman origins. Many feature somewhere in the walks that can be downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk.



Shallow tumulus beside Langley - Elmdon - Clavering parish boundary intersection.

This article was drafted by a member of The Hundred Parishes Society who allowed us to adapt and publish it.

Ken McDonald, Secretary



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Art Studio & Gallery	Heather Brown	01279 815453
Ballroom Dance	Fred Winters	01763 271942
Ballet for kids	Philippa McMeechan	01763 271010
BAGS	Rosemary Wheatley	01279 814678
Beauty Therapist	Sarah Whiting	07887 638359
Beauty - HEH Nails	Hana Hainsby	07730 619522
Birchanger Magazine	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Butterflies Preschool	Carly Richards	01279 810800
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
Garden Services	Will Grange	07516 783138
Hairdresser Men/Boys	Emma Marks	07527 227943
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Holistic therapy/Reflexology	Shelley Williams	07476 279262
Landscaping Services	Mark Taylor	07941 357934
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Line Dancing	Shelley	01279 864781
Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Painting & Décor	David Debnam	07973 861268
Parish Clerk	Keith Williams	01279 814473
Pilates	Mandy Cousins	07713 272664
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	07475 092658

St. Mary's Church



Church services - 11.15 am

5th January	Family service with Pam Lee
12th January	Matins with Hugh Mascetti
19th January	Family service with Pam Lee
26th January	Holy Communion with Revd Colin Fairweather

With the closing of 2024 and start of a new Year, there are many challenges for us to face. Some, like the problems in the middle east and Ukraine, seem unsurmountable or too distant for us to worry about but as we all know, no matter where you are in the world, we are all affected by problems arising elsewhere. Global conflict is a disaster waiting to happen and we seem to be getting closer to it every day. I pray that someone will emerge that is strong enough to introduce common sense to the table to bring about a negotiated peace for all.

There are challenges here at home too. People are concerned about their finances and falling standards of living. The poor are getting poorer, they cry. We need more affordable houses for the homeless, they shout. Others demand better jobs with higher pay. Better health services, improved transport links, more police officers. When, I ask myself, will people realise that to have all these things someone has to pay the price and unless we are prepared to do this then we will not be able to have the utopia that we demand. The bottom line is we must put in more money and effort if we want more out of our systems.

Another challenge close to my heart is the proposal for development of mainly farmland to the north of Birchanger. Residents will be well aware of the diversity of flora and fauna in and around Digby View woods. The footpaths are well used, particularly in the spring and summer months and the whole area was a godsend during 2021/22 covid pandemic. Getting out for a brisk walk around these attractive fields was for some their only opportunity to safely catch a little fresh air and to shout out to a neighbour whilst remaining safely isolated. The wild tranquillity of this area is under attack from those who propose to turn it into bricks, concrete and manicured parkland. If that happens where will the wildlife, go? Who will look out for them.

There is a second major problem. If a development of this size were to go ahead it would bring about the closure of our church which has stood in the heart of Birchanger for over 1,000 years. Finance is always a difficult subject, but you will understand that to keep the church in good repair is a thankless task and St Mary's is reliant upon its small congregation to pay all its expenses. Our yearly contribution would increase to over £20,000, a sum that we could not pay. Eventually the church would be closed for good. If that happened then it is likely that the Diocese would sell off what little land assets that our church has left; these are the church hall, allotments and recreation field. I leave you to guess at who might buy these areas and what they would do with them?

If you want to stop the loss of these amenities, then you need to act now. Yes, the church needs financial support but just as important is having people walk through the door, attending services on a weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly basis. Not just once or twice a year – or never. It is up to you to support St Mary's or lose it and the church assets too.

Pam Lee (Church Warden) Tel: 07702 171744 pam.mark2@btinternet.com



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