



# Birchanger Village Magazine

February 2025

Issue 265



## Your Magazine Needs Help!

Regrettably, we will be losing our local long-standing printer of the magazine, Ken Devine of Keeley & Lowe who is retiring in March of this year. Ken has supported the magazine for many years, charging us a minimal amount for printing for which we are most grateful. However, the new printing costs from other suppliers are in excess of £800 per year more expensive and due to these extra costs, we have significant challenges in 2025 and urgently need more income from advertisers or sponsors.

Birchanger Village Magazine is a non-profit making local publication which is distributed free of charge to over 450 homes and 960 residents in Birchanger on a monthly basis, 12 times per year. The magazine is used to inform the villagers of local news, special events, entertainment, and services. Since its inauguration in 2000, the publication has been produced and distributed entirely by volunteers whereby the only costs incurred are for printing, and in order to cover our printing costs, we rely solely on local advertisers and sponsors.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our current advertisers and sponsors for the support they have given over the years and hope that they will continue to give their invaluable help for the future.

If you, or someone you know, would like to support the magazine by advertising or sponsoring, we would like to hear from you. A single advert costs only £17 and a yearly subscription for 12 x adverts starts as little as £168 per year. We accept finished adverts in PDF or Microsoft Word format and jpg pictures. We are also happy to produce adverts for you free of charge.

For more details, please contact the editor, Peter Sampson by email: [magazine@birchanger.com](mailto:magazine@birchanger.com) or telephone: 07817904333.

**Please help keep your local magazine alive!**

## Response from Birchanger Parish Council on Proposed Barn Conversion

Birchanger Parish Council strongly opposes this proposal to convert this old metal barn into 4 small houses.

The proposal is outside the village development limits. It is also backland development. The Essex Design Code, adopted by UDC states H2.6 Homes and buildings main entrances must face the street. The proposed houses would not face the street but would open directly onto the popular, extremely well used footpath 26, known locally as the sand track.

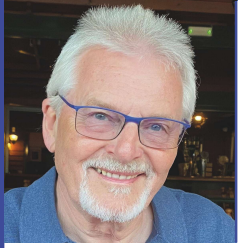
Under the Q class criteria, the barn being converted must now have a suitable existing access to a public highway for vehicles. It does not. To reach the barn from the nearest public highway (Harrisons), it is necessary to drive along PROW (public rights of way) footpath 26. This popular footpath is used extensively by dog walkers (so much so that the Parish Council have installed a second large dog waste bin opposite the barn to meet capacity requirements).

The footpath is also used by horse riders, cyclists and hikers, many with young children especially during the summer months as the path is deemed a low-risk area. Footpath 26 is not wide enough to accommodate vehicular traffic and allow safe passage to footpath users. This is confirmed in the suggested use of passing spaces on the Tracking of Access Road plan submitted by the applicant.

PROW are protected by the Highways Act 1980. Any unauthorised interference with a PROW is a breach of this legislation. In 2014 an appeal was refused for a single property to be built in the green belt off of footpath 26.

Parking for unit 1 is alongside a ditch with access built across the ditch. The ditch has been known to overflow heightening a risk of flooding in the area.....

*Continued on Page 8*



# Planning Permission for 9 Houses on the Equestrian Paddock Refused!

## Reasons for Refusal (UTT/24/0642/FUL)

1) The proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt where no special circumstances have been set out to justify why development needs to take place here contrary to the presumption in favour of protecting the openness and rural character of the area and providing a sustainable location, in conflict with ULP Policy S6, paragraphs 143, 15, 153, 155, 115(b) of the NPPF. The tilted balance in favour of granting planning permission at paragraph 11 d) is disengaged in this case by part i) to paragraph 11 d) and footnote 7 given the identified harm to the Green Belt provides a clear reason for refusing development.

2) The proposals would have a harmful impact on the setting of the neighbouring listed barn and would result in the loss of the undeveloped area that allows the architectural interest of the barn as a historic rural agricultural building of traditional construction to be appreciated. The Local Planning Authority has a duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting and significance of any features of special architectural or historical interest.

Having regard to the guidance in Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Planning Authority has considered the public benefits associated with the development but concludes that these would not outweigh the harm caused to the setting of the designated heritage asset. The proposals are thereby contrary to ULP Policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford District Local Plan.

3) The proposal will result in a restriction to the afforded forward inter-visibility between users of the public highway on Birchanger Lane. The lack of such visibility would result in an unacceptable degree of hazard to all road users to the detriment of highway safety and not in accordance with The Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011, and Uttlesford Local Plan. Policy GEN1



*Uttlesford District Council Authorising Officer Lindsay Trevillian 16 January 2025*

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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/](http://www.facebook.com/birchanger/)

*Peter Sampson*



[magazine@birchanger.com](mailto:magazine@birchanger.com)



07817 904333



2 Harrisons, Birchanger



# VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin



## High Bills?

So now that the Christmas Season is well and truly over, to the relief of some and the regret of others, mainly the younger generation, it is time to get the new year into perspective.

Will we plan for a holiday this year?

Can we afford it? Can we afford anything once the winter bills are in? It is very hard to think of holidays until we know the answers to these questions for all but the lucky few. If the bills are bigger than expected talk to your suppliers. It is better to pay a portion of the amount on account and offer regular amounts until the bill is sorted. Perhaps it would suit you better to be able to pay a fixed price monthly. There are many schemes which will take away some of the stress of these very expensive winter months for more than just the heating bills. Use them. Ask your providers for the best tariff for you. Remember that providers do not want to force their customers into a position where they can't pay. They would soon be facing bankruptcy themselves!

## Beware of Scammers

The added worry about winter fuel bills is that they are now prey to hackers. They will hack into the suppliers' accounts for your details then email you to say that there is a problem with your account at their end, or something similar, but they have created a new way for you to make your monthly payments. They then provide you with new details for you to use. Get rid of these fast and delete them from your computer. Contact your supplier with the contact details you already have and report what has happened. Never let anyone else other than a known and trusted source have your payment details for anything.

## February Problems

It seems that there is a great deal of sickness about in February, mainly colds, flu and chest infections. If not actually ill a large number of people feel unwell. There seems to be no end to winter. But there will be. February blues must be respected and cared for. Maybe not by actual medicine, but a call to an old friend not seen for ages, a trip to the shops to look at the coming season's offerings, or even just painting a room can help. Do something different. Get out of the daily routine for a while. Think of the holiday you just booked or go online to choose one if you haven't.



## Over Worked Doctors

The surgeries have been extra busy over the last few months. Now with the flu season upon us the demand for their services has grown even more. If you think you have flu, there is nothing much anyone can do for you and mostly you just have to

ride out the horrible days it takes to disappear. Antibiotics do not work on viruses unless taken to assist those with an underlying chest infection. Visits to the surgery can spread the virus or infection. Local chemists run a prescription delivery service which is free, so if you do need medication, request that your medicine is delivered to you when speaking to the surgery. It saves you going out and helps you and others from spreading germs. Remember flu and its attendant infections will pass and like the weather, things will get better soon.

## Beware Distraction Theft

Distraction theft is on the up. People are losing bags, purses, newly purchased goods and much more, just because their attention has been diverted, possibly by an accomplice while bags, handbags, shopping and all manner of covetable items are deftly removed. Blink and you have lost your shopping and probably a lot more. The thieves, who you may have been chatting to a few moments earlier, are nowhere to be seen and neither are your possessions!

## 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:**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 7.45 for 8.00 pm

[bags@birchanger.com](mailto:bags@birchanger.com)

**Olivia: 07568 574703**

**Rosemary: 01279 814678**

**Liz Turner: 07473 508056**

## Double Decker Buses Churning up Birchanger Lane

It is a farce which wrecks the verges and banks all along Birchanger Lane twice a day when schools open and close again at the end of the school day. Two double decker school buses going in opposite directions taking their cargoes to different schools meet each other somewhere down the lane, and on a daily basis someone's hedge, garden, fence, or flower bed are ruined. Residents can only watch as their gardens get damaged. Is there no way that one of these buses at least can be rerouted, or their times amended? There are no traffic lights which can close the lane one way while the one bus negotiates first then the other follows. It hasn't happened before. Why now? Hasn't the coach company even noticed the scratches mounting on their bus? Are they prepared to pay for the damage to the gardens? As if we don't already know the answer to that!

## The Local Plan Submitted

Let's see if the inspectorate likes this one. The last 'Uttlesford Local Plan' was rejected by the government. We can only hope they accept the new one, as without it, anything the inspectorate enforces will be much worse, allowing developers more or less a free hand. Starmer's new rules could be applied, turning green belt land to grey belt. Who knows? We can only hope that the green belt around London will remain. As we saw last month with the consultation on the proposal for an estate from Forest Hall Road to Birchanger, the vultures are circling.



## Why Not Use Dialaride?

Dialaride is a service where you can use a minibus and driver for a special day out. It is suitable for groups of up to 12 or so people who would like a vehicle and driver to

take them out for a day or part of a day on a trip of some kind. Prices are competitive and it is an ideal way for small groups to travel in comfort. As far as possible the service is adaptable to the needs of its customers. For more information call 01245 203952 between 10-12 Monday to Friday or use the Travel Essex App for more information.

## ENVIRO ELECTRICAL SERVICES

[enviroelectricalservices@gmail.com](mailto:enviroelectricalservices@gmail.com)



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**07703484090**

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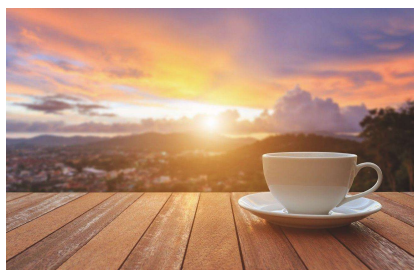
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## Hare Coursing Returns to Uttlesford

After a few years when we hoped that Hare Coursing had left Uttlesford for good it was horrifying to learn that Hare Coursing has returned. For those who do not know what Hare Coursing is, suffice to say that it is an activity by some very rough and cruel men who use dogs to chase and kill hares and rabbits.



The police are anxious to stop this and are asking for help from the public, so if you see men with dogs and a motley collection of cars in fields near us tell the police immediately using 999. I have seen them in groups away from the roads and I hoped this horrible practice had been eliminated for good. This time we must make sure it is.



## Another Coffee Morning at Easter?

Well maybe if people really would like it. Easter is late this year and if the weather is warm there is a remote

possibility it could be held outside.

If we did have one, is there any particular charity we could support that might be close to someone's heart. What do you think? Happy to hear your views. If you would like to come to an Easter Coffee Morning, you would be very welcome.



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## A Cat's Tale

'Scat' was one of my Granddaughter's cat's kittens. She came from a long line of family-owned cats, all of which were of the black and white fluffy type. This time however, her mum must have found a new partner, because Scat's litter all turned out to be tabby except for Scat, who was the only one who was not fluffy and had narrow banded stripes.



She came to live with us when she was 6 weeks old. Also in residence at the time was her great uncle who was only two years older than her, a very big black and white fluffy cat. Scat played normally as a kitten, and her great uncle was very protective of her,

even trying to get her into the garden on warm summer days. They curled up together at all times.

But as Scat grew older, she started to decline his invitations to go out. In fact, she had her own specially selected sleeping places around the house which she used in strict rotation. She never used her basket and in winter she knew all the hot spots. In the summer, she relaxed on cool tiles, but rarely went out.

She had a kind of 6th sense. She knew when I was going to be ill before I did, and she would often seek me out to sit on my lap. Because of her inactivity and despite our best efforts, she became incredibly fat. Years went by and we adopted a dog who we named 'Wiki', and whilst the senior cat did not mind at all, having been raised with a chocolate Labrador, Scat gave Wiki a wide berth. They tolerated each other but nothing more.

We were getting used to her uncle's occasional absences, he had previously disappeared for three weeks but always came back in the end. However, his last absence lasted for some two years. In those two years, Scat made some life changing decisions. Despite being neutered, (we had more than enough cats in our family) she acquired a boyfriend. She would spend long dark evenings at a certain window, and there were paw marks on the windowsill in the morning. We never actually saw the amorous tom as he only visited after dark, but then she started going out come rain or shine. She even stayed out all night occasionally. Her weight simply fell away and her coat became sleek and glossy.

Scat became a hunter, and on many occasions we found small partly eaten corpses, a big change from the spiders that were her only catch before. We did not exactly welcome this! But with her new athletic lifestyle she went on for many years and lived to be a grand old lady.

Perhaps as a kitten she was subjected to covert bullying, but why did she sleep regularly curled up with her great uncle? We still have Wiki the dog and while Scat appeared not to like him very much, they did accept each other, and she used to sit and pass close to him without any apparent concerns. She literally had a new lease of life.

She liked lots of small snack meals. She disliked Wiki pinching her food and she had her own feeding area where he could not reach her. Scats' finest hour was sleeping in Wiki's basket and refusing to move out for him. We miss her.

*Elizabeth Godwin*

## Airport Local Resident Discount Scheme

Stansted Airport have recently introduced a new barrierless system for Express Set Down which will come into effect on Wednesday 22nd January 2025. From then, you will be able to drive straight through without using your discount card and pay your charges remotely, eliminating the need to stop at a barrier.

They recommend that you create an account where you can add a payment card. This will allow for automatic payments for each of your journeys through the Express Set Down. You can also pay online or by phone after your visit to the Express Set Down area. Please note that payment must be made by midnight the day after your visit to avoid a Parking Charges.

Here are the ways to pay: Online: <https://pay.stanstedairport.com/> or Phone: 0345 017 5046. Your vehicle registration will automatically be registered to apply your discount. If you have provided a second vehicle registration, that will also be included.

## Birchanger Guitarist and Keyboard Player at the Club on 1st March



Living in Birchanger for over 40 years, local band member, Bern Hainsby has always enjoyed playing at the social club alongside our magazine editor Peter Sampson on drums. Their well established band of 10 years, 'Main Offender', survived a few changes due to illness but were then hit by a long break caused by Covid. The band's last gig at the club was back in November 2021 retiring in early 2022.

The long-established Essex/Herts group, 'Machine Shed Band' approached Bern, adding keyboards to their all-guitar line-up, which enables them to play a much wider range of songs and genre due to Bern playing piano, organ, harmonica, and sax, adding to the mix.

Machine Shed Band will be playing 100% live at Birchanger Sports and Social Club on Saturday 1st March, playing a mix of rock, soul, blues, rock n roll, funk and classic pop numbers by Otis Reading, ZZ Top, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Prince, Billy Idol, Beatles, Stones, Status Quo, Elvis, Creedence Clearwater, Kinks, Rafferty, Bonnamassa and many more. You don't want to miss it, so go along and have a great evening.

# What's on in the village...



February 2025



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

**Garden Waste Skip Outside the Club on Saturday Between 15.00-16.00:** 1/3. 29/3. 26/4. 24/5. 21/6. 19/7. 16/8. 13/9. 11/10. 8/11.

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.**

					<b>1</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat draw	<b>2</b> <b>St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 Family Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>3</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>4</b> <b>Garden Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>5</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>6</b> <b>Black Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>7</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	<b>8</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat draw	<b>9</b> <b>St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 Matins Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>10</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>11</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>12</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.00-18.00 Hip-Hop with Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>13</b> <b>Green Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>14</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance Valentines Day	<b>15</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat draw	<b>16</b> <b>St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 Family Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>17</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>18</b> <b>Garden Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>19</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>20</b> <b>Black Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>21</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	<b>22</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat Draw Quiz Night	<b>23</b> <b>St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 am Holy Communion Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>24</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>25</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>26</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance 20.00 <b>BAGS</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Green Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>28</b> <b>Church Hall:</b> 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



### Curry Night

22nd MARCH - BOOKING REQUIRED

25% OFF FOOD



WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS

### 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



Bookings now being taken for  
**MOTHERS DAY LUNCH**  
Entertainment from Anna Wells

### 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](http://www.birchangerclub.com)



For all general enquiries

Telephone: 01279 813441 Email: [club@birchanger.com](mailto:club@birchanger.com)

Website: [www.birchangerclub.com](http://www.birchangerclub.com)

Follow us on Social Media

For all news and announcements







We have been having a wonderful time outdoors exploring the natural environment around Preschool. The children have especially enjoyed exploring the outdoors in the icy weather. They created these wonderful ice pendants using natural resources they found on a walk. This activity was a wonderful way for the children to see the cause and effect of the freezing temperature and they couldn't believe that their water creations had turned to ice overnight. The pendants looked so pretty sparkling in the sunshine when we hung them up.



The children have started to decorate the Preschool for Chinese New Year this week. They have been creating some wonderful dragon pictures, making lanterns, dancing to Chinese festival music and will be tasting some delicious Chinese foods at snack times.



The Grange Care Home in Newport kindly invited us to visit them, which was a wonderful experience for both the children and the care home residents. The children got to colour with them, sing with them and talk to them. It was so humbling to see the residents' happy faces from having us visit and we are going to be doing this on a regular basis. It was so

lovely to see a three-year-old talking and laughing with a 103-year-old!

We now have spaces available from 25<sup>th</sup> April for children to start, so if you are looking for a place at preschool for your child please do get in touch and speak to either Carly or Emma. We take children from aged 2 years old.

Tel: 01279 810800 Email: [admin@birchangerbutterflies.org.uk](mailto:admin@birchangerbutterflies.org.uk)

## Barn Conversion Continued From Page 1

Under the Q class criteria, the barn must have been in use solely for agricultural purposes for at least the last 10 years.

The barn has not been in agricultural use for over 25 years. Birchanger residents had been able to rent storage space until 2020. In 2021 a decision to allow conversion of the barn into two dwellings was overturned by the High Court. (UTT/21/1255/PAQ3)

Under the Q class criteria, the structure of the barn needs to be functionally suitable for residential conversion, be in good enough shape to be converted, and already be "capable of functioning as a dwelling".

Birchanger Parish Council consider the existing structure does not fit the above criteria. It is totally unsuitable as a residential property given its age and being constructed entirely of metal. Re-doing the structure should be considered a barn renovation rather than a barn conversion and therefore should not fall under Permitted Development rights.

Numerous barns have been converted in Uttlesford, but these have almost entirely been outside the green belt, of timber construction or were of other merit, clearly not the case here.

There are no shops in Birchanger. There is a limited bus service which does not go to the local supermarket therefore residents use their cars. Four new houses would create additional traffic (residents, visitors and deliveries) through Harrisons, already a congested residential area and then on to Birchanger Lane. Birchanger Lane is narrow, and at some points has no footpath on either side.

Birchanger Lane is identified as unsuitable for HGVs. It is impossible for any medium sized vehicle to pass another without mounting the footpath or driving across a grass verge, where there is one. This would be a huge, dangerous problem for construction vehicles.

There is now a rear annex at 206B Birchanger Lane on footpath 26. The lounge window faces onto the footpath where, if this development goes ahead, vehicles would pass within a metre or so denying the occupant quiet enjoyment of their home. Whilst this happens on an occasional basis now, it would obviously be far more frequent should these four dwellings be allowed to go ahead.

Birchanger Primary school is full. Some children who live in the village are already being taken to schools outside the village. There is no secondary school provision.

The ecology report, part of the planning application supporting statement, makes no reference to the Soprano Pipistrelle bats and Common Pipistrelle bats protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The bats currently roost in St Mary's Church. The Church is in the immediate locality, less than 300m from the Barn and it is therefore highly likely that the bats forage in the Barn area.

Development of this site has been refused twice previously:

UTT/21/1255/PAQ3 was for 2 properties. The decision by UDC to allow this was subsequently overturned by the High Court as incorrect information had been supplied by the agent regarding the use of the barn. There were 110 objections to this development but strangely only one from Birchanger Parish Council is still available online on the Uttlesford planning portal. Removal of said resident objections is a questionable procedure and could be deemed inappropriate.

UTT/22/0539/PAR3 was for change of use to commercial. This was refused by UDC because of conflicting evidence regarding the use of the barn.

Every year at Birchanger's Annual Parish meeting a motion to protect the green belt around our village is carried unanimously.



# u3a

## Stansted Mountfitchet

*"Dull one isn't it?"*

*"But it is going to get out this afternoon!"*

*"Ah, enjoy it then!"*

An alien might wonder what "it" was but as a passer-by we don't need to articulate our reliance on the sun - we just monitor it constantly - appreciating the lift in our mood and occasionally recognising the miracle of growth it brings about.

The Garden group in the u3a is clearly attuned to growth and how it can be nurtured and guided to create plants and produce to gladden us all. Meeting on the second Monday of the month from 2.00 to 3.30pm the group examines a broad range of topics all reflecting its members' interests. As well as regular meetings there are also visits to historic and beautiful gardens.



Planned for February is a visit to Bennington Lordship gardens in Stevenage which boast an ancient family home and a diversity of types of gardens, including a formal rose garden and walled garden, as well as drifts of snowdrops at this time of year.

The Garden group is just one of many classes and activities which you could participate in were you to join the u3a. Run by volunteers the u3a is a nationwide movement which exists to encourage local people to continue learning by following their choice of activity in the company of people who become friends.

The range of activities to choose from is impressive. Take the monthly meeting with its 2025 eclectic mix of talks, including a second visit from Lindsay Whitehouse former governor of Chelmsford Prison. Also, in the Saturday Seminars and to stimulate your brain further, Professor Anthony White will give a talk on 'Rockets and Space' on March 8th. If all that were not enough, each meeting comes with tea and biscuits!

For more information visit [www.stansted.u3asite.uk/](http://www.stansted.u3asite.uk/) or call 07874 385541.

*Julia Cook*

## THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

February is snowdrop season at the Gardens. It is so wonderful to see those first flowers of the year, massed under the trees, on the banks and in the grass. Children love finding them around the Gardens and climbing up into the treehouse; and dogs on leads enjoy the space too. In a changing climate we now have to keep our fingers and toes crossed that the snowdrops don't open early and that we don't have the extreme winter rains we had last year. So far, so good on the latter, only time will tell on the former. Last year, after the wash-out snowdrop season we planted out lots of bulbs, so the Gardens should be even more spectacular this year.



Our snowdrop days are Sunday 9, Thursday 13, Sunday 16 and Thursday 20 February, with advance tickets available and gates opening at 11.00. Our volunteers will be ready to serve hot drinks and other refreshments. And snowdrops in the green and other snowdrop merchandise will be available for sale. Full details are on our website: [www.Eastonlodge.co.uk](http://www.Eastonlodge.co.uk)

For our garden volunteers there will be some really busy weeks in the run-up to the Snowdrop Open Days. They



will be finishing up the new fencing, tidying fallen branches and using them to strengthen

and top up the dead-hedges, and planting the last of this dormant season's new trees. Our cake and soup makers will also be prepping for the Open Days.

We look forward to welcoming readers to the Gardens again in 2025. *Jill Goldsmith*





## The Hundred Parishes Society

Enjoying a winter stroll along any of the described walks within the Hundred Parishes provides an opportunity to view the landscape features visible from various vantage points. Much of this countryside has been farmed by many successive generations as these custodians of the land have raised livestock and garnered variable harvests of grain.



Stansted Mountfitchet

The spring of 2024 was rather wet, and this resulted in poor establishment of autumn-sown cereals. This, combined with the inclement conditions during harvesting, resulted in disappointingly low yields. However, it seems that with dry weather in the autumn of 2024, the sown wheat, barley and oats have germinated well, with most fields now covered with fresh green shoots.



Hatfield Broad Oak

Many farmers have decided to cut back on growing oil seed rape, and they may choose to plant alternative niche crops such as sunflowers or borage once the weather is warmer.

These farmed landscapes have traditionally supported assorted wildlife including skylarks, rooks, ladybirds, bumble bees, butterflies, badgers and foxes. In addition, well-maintained soils contain not just beneficial fungi, but a variety of earthworms and beetles which in turn provide food for many other creatures. Sadly, other less-welcome creatures such as slugs and root-eating beetle or fly larvae are also present. Seeing a sizeable flock of birds following a plough demonstrates this plethora of food!



Langley

Recent concerns about the loss of insect life, especially pollinators or those that eat aphids, is encouraging farmers to find ways of enhancing habitats for insects by leaving marginal strips round fields for wildflowers, planting new hedges or creating beetle banks within their fields. These features may be visible from footpaths during the winter months so make a note of where they are and plan return visits during the summer to observe them full of flowers and other wildlife.



Manuden



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## Village Services and Activities

Service	Contact	Telephone No.
Allotments	Council Clerk	01279 814473
Alzheimer	Marian	07803 115826
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
Handyman	Charlie Grange	07514 783239
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
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

2 <sup>nd</sup>	February	Family Service
9 <sup>th</sup>	February	Matins with Hugh Mascetti
16 <sup>th</sup>	February	Family with Pam Lee
23 <sup>rd</sup>	February	Holy Communion with the Venerable Kate Peacock

### Church News

Looking at the list of services set out above you might think "Where is the Vicar." Well, he's off on holiday in February and the Reverend Helen is unwell. For a time, it did look as if there would be no Holy Communion at St Mary's this month. However, I am very pleased to be able to say that the Venerable Kate Peacock, the new Archdeacon for Stansted, has stepped in and will be here on the 23rd of February.

Kate was ordained in 2003 and served her curacy in Cambridge and just before she joined us, Kate was Deputy Director for Mission and Ministry of St Albans. In response to her appointment, Kate said "I am thrilled and humbled to have been appointed to this role and I hope to offer my passion and experience of parish ministry and church growth to serve God here." Kate is married to Daniel, and they have two teenage daughters. We look forward to welcoming them to the parish and hope that at least some of you will join us.

### Future Events

4th February PCC Meeting

### Prayer for today

*Lord, our world is in turmoil and your people are suffering. Shine your light over all the world and bring your peace.*

*Amen*

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

## Village Church Hall



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