



Birchanger Village Magazine

May 2025

Issue 268



New Stansted Airport Planning Application 'Imminent'

The public consultation on Stansted Airport's so-called "Sustainable Development Plan" (SDP) ended on 10 March and the airport is expected – very soon - to submit a new planning application for expansion to a capacity of 51 million passengers per annum (mppa), 70% more than its current throughput of 30mppa. But this is not quite as bad as it might first seem.

The SDP sets out the airport's expansion ambitions for the next 20 years and so the growth to 51mppa should be gradual. More importantly, the SDP states that the existing runway will be able to accommodate the planned growth. There will be no increase in the number of flights and no need for a second runway. The growth will be achieved through an increase in the number of passengers per plane. For example, the new Ryanair Boeing 737 aircraft will have 228 seats compared to 189 seats in the current fleet. However, Stansted Airport will in future face much stiffer competition from other airports. Since the change of Government last July:

London City Airport has been granted planning permission to expand to 9ppa compared to its current throughput of just 4mppa.

Luton Airport has just been granted planning permission to expand to 32mppa compared to its current throughput of 17mppa.

Gatwick Airport has been notified that the Government is "minded to approve" expansion to 73mppa compared to its current throughput of 43mppa. Final approval is expected in September.

Heathrow Airport has been asked by the Government to bring forward its plans for a third runway by June. This will be a long-term project which, when completed, will take Heathrow's capacity to about 135mppa, compared to its current throughput of 84mppa.



In summary, London's airports are on track to increase their capacity to 300mppa, compared to the present demand of 178mppa.

Where will the extra passengers come from? If this level of growth in air travel comes about, how can this be reconciled with the Government's commitment to tackle global warming and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050?

Another fundamental question is at local level. An extra 21 million passengers a year at Stansted would put enormous strain on the local road network, and when considered alongside the extra traffic generated by all the new local house building, how can our local roads possibly cope? (See page 8 for night flights information.)

Birchanger Parish Council Chairman's Report 26th March

Having won their latest appeal, the travellers applied for 6 more pitches to accommodate their growing families which would make a total of 12. However, when allowing their first appeal, the Planning Inspector allowed only 6 pitches for 6 specifically named families. At their second appeal the Inspector again only allowed 6 pitches. The Parish Council have, of course, objected to this further incursion into the green belt and I know that many residents and the Residents Association have also objected. So far, no decision has been announced by the district council but I'm sure if it's refused, as the previous two applications were, that the travellers will appeal.

There was also an application for 9 houses to be built on green belt which is presently used as a paddock. This application was refused.

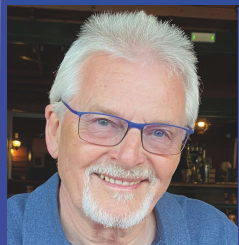
In November we were informed by City and Country that they proposed to build 1050 new homes on green belt land between Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet. As part of drafting the new local plan, Uttlesford District Council had issued a call for sites (this is an opportunity for landowners to put forward their land for consideration) City and Country had put forward all their land between the two parishes, but this was all refused by UDC- it's green belt!

In December Birchanger Parish Council and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council met with representatives of C&C who were told, in no uncertain terms by both PCs, why we were against any development. Not only because it's in the green belt but because the local highways can barely manage with the present volume of traffic let alone the increase of another thousand cars, the lack of school places, doctors surgeries etc. and, of course, the green belt is there to avoid coalescence between communities.

I was also contacted by Bishop's Stortford Town Council who are against any development as well and were intending to contact C&C to inform them of this. Any application to build would need to go before UDC and, as I've said, they are against building in the green belt. C&C have a huge land bank and they are prepared to wait for years before applying for planning permission to build on any of it. Whenever they do, the Parish Council will fight to retain our green belt and trust that the residents of Birchanger will support us as they have previously.

The conversion of the Barn on footpath 26 into 4 small houses will be going ahead. The PC has raised concerns about large construction vehicles reaching the site via the lane and Harrisons but as this is a Highways issue I have asked our County Councillor to take this up with Essex Highways.

(Continued on page 9.)



Editors Letter Box

Dear Readers,

Volunteers Required for the Magazine

We are asking for volunteers to consider offering a little of their free time to help with the Birchanger Village Magazine. There is very little experience required, and training will be given by the outgoing team. The magazine is a non-profit publication run on a voluntary basis. A brief description of the positions are as follows:

Chair: Heading the team, the Chair controls the direction of news and maintains the integrity of the publication, holding monthly meetings and oversight of the finances. It requires 2-3 hours per month.

Treasurer: The treasurer takes care of the finances of the magazine; receiving payments from advertisers and paying invoices by bank transfer. Procuring new and maintaining current advertisers and donors. It requires 2-3 hours per month.

Editor: Receiving local news, reports, and notices from existing sources, editing and layout of text and photographs, liaison with advertisers and producing adverts when required. Liaison with the Printer. Writing the occasional editorials and maintaining the 'What's On In The Village' page. The magazine uses a simple publication software to produce the magazine. It requires 10-12 hours per month.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, please contact Peter Sampson and have a chat on 0781 7904333 or email: magazine@birchanger.com.

New Play Equipment Under Consideration for the Park

During the last annual inspection of the play equipment, it was reported that it would be advisable to replace the wooden trail and playframe at the park within the next couple of years. There is no risk currently, but the woodwork has started to show signs of deterioration. Birchanger Parish Council are investigating the cost of replacing this equipment with something similar. Cost estimates for the new equipment so far is around £24,000. Clearly, the council does not have sufficient funds to cover this and so the council is looking for external grants from the district and county councils, the Stansted Airport Community Fund (SACF) and others.

Roundabout Damage

On the last annual inspection, no issue with the roundabout was reported. However, despite this, two planks on the roundabout were damaged recently and must be replaced. At the time of this publication, quotations for replacing the damaged planks (and possibly the rest of the planks) have been requested by the council and as soon as they have the costs, the work will be carried out. In the meantime, until the repairs have been carried out the roundabout is out of bounds.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,



Cricket Team Bewildered by Mindless Vandalism

Once again someone has messed with the covers that the village team has saved up for a number of years to buy. It is disgusting anti-social behaviour and anyone who knows who is responsible should pass the names onto the Social Club.

The first XI team has gained promotion in their League for 2 years in succession and the second XI has also had excellent results. They should be supported and not have their endeavours ruined by idiots.

John Warwick

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, *Peter Sampson*

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2 Harrisons, Birchanger

VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin

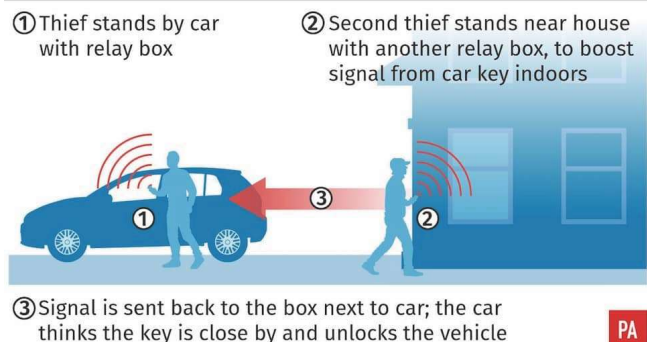
Alpaca Walks Near Us

At Great Easton Manor no less, there are Alpaca walks which are easily reached from Birchanger. You will be able to walk with your allocated alpaca through the grounds with help always at hand. After a health and safety check and a briefing on how to handle your alpaca, you will quickly find out it has its own definitive personality. Visitors are taken on their alpaca walk in groups of four. Walks take place in all weathers, so please wear appropriate clothing. If it is raining, note that umbrellas are not allowed as alpacas do not seem to like these at all and do their best to destroy them with potentially dangerous results. After the walk you will be able to spend time with your alpaca and on return to the paddock you will be able to give your alpaca special treats and learn about their care and feeding. People find that just being with alpacas is a relaxing experience. To round it off, you have the opportunity to have a cream tea and other treats at the Manor tearoom.

30 Seconds to Steal Your Keyless Car

A car thief is able to steal your car within 30 seconds using an electronic relay system to amplify the signal from your wireless key fob and you won't know anything about it. When you do find your car stolen in the morning, you will of course call the police, but by the time they get to you it is probably too late to do anything about it. No wonder car theft is on the up. So, what can we do? When not in use, keep your key fob in a metal box. Alternatively, buy a Faraday Pouch which will protect the key's signal and can also be used outside the home, but check it is functioning regularly as the metal mesh inside the pouch can eventually wear out.

How keyless theft works



Could Your CCTV Camera Help Solve a Crime Near You?

People's own security cameras have been a great help in helping solve crimes that happen within the vicinity of where they live. Just a glimpse of a face, a number plate or recognition of a car might be enough to solve

a crime where everything else has failed. The police will only access your camera data if they believe your camera might have the information they need. This does not mean they will have access to other cameras in your property, and it does not mean that you will necessarily have to attend court. To register your camera, visit the Essex police website and follow instructions. An incident near us was caught on CCTV cameras. Unfortunately, the cameras captured the van but not the number plate on this occasion, but that will not always be the case. The police will only have access to registered cameras at the host property and only where the police believe they might be of help.

Building of 9 houses Appealed! Ref. UTT/24/0642/FUL

The applicant has appealed the council's refusal to build 9 houses on the paddock near the sand track behind Harrisons. If you wish to object to this project, please submit your comments to:

Register or login: <https://publicaccess.uttlesford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=SA1D7EQNJXD00>

By email to: planning@uttlesford.gov.uk

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

When making comments, you need to state the following:

The planning application reference number (starting UTT/)

The address of the site

Your name

Your address

You may only comment on the following subjects:

loss of light or privacy

design and appearance of the proposed development

character of the local area

parking and traffic

highway safety

noise and smells

loss of trees and landscaping

impact on listed buildings and conservation areas

Greenbelt Land

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 25th June 7.45 for 8.00 pm

bags@birchanger.com

Rosemary: 01279 814678 - Liz Turner: 07473 508056

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Saffron Walden - The Best Place to Live - Again!

Our area has won this title before and now Saffron Walden and the surrounding areas has been voted the best place to live in the UK, overcoming all the famous areas across England to win the title for our district again, despite several downsides such as heavy traffic and the location of the station away from the town centre. Saffron Walden has access to good award-winning schools, with several private schools available in Cambridge. Mobile coverage is rated as good, and Audley End Station provides access to Cambridge 15 minutes away. London is about 54 minutes depending on the trains available at time of travel. There are areas where it is possible to live car free, an advantage where traffic can be bad. There are e-bike schemes and clean air zones. Shopping is good for a small town. There is a market twice a week, good dress shops, toy shops, supermarkets, DIY shops, and a small cottage hospital. All this with access to open countryside cycle tracks and bridle ways within five minutes. It is a place where you can find a new home on one of the many building developments and employment can be found in shops, offices, the local hospital, schools and all the many small units including pubs and local restaurants across the town. Since it was last a winner, the town has a new energy, and worth a visit to see for yourselves. You might also discover some earlier Birchanger residents there as well.

Somewhere Unusual to Visit?

How about the Essex Records Office? Sounds boring but it actually isn't. There are records of all sorts there. Even things about Birchanger which you might never have known about. If you go as a group, the office will arrange a tour which include items specific to your area. It is a good idea to specify what you are interested in before you go if you visit as a group. There really is so much Essex knowledge stored there. Even Birchanger Parish Council is in there somewhere. The Records Office also arranges days where there are talks on special subjects. Not all may be of interest to everyone, but they may feature the life of an individual and what was happening during that individual's lifetime. It's worth a try.

Do You Know Where Your Purse Is?

At home it can turn up anywhere, but it's different when you are out and about. You are especially at risk when you are out shopping. It is so easy to put your purse or bag down while you pick up something you are considering buying. You get to the till and look for your purse. You forgot to pick it up and now someone else has it but just who? Everyone seems to have melted away. What about the credit card accidentally left by the till? You won't be seeing that again! Call your bank immediately. That will at least stop the spending spree at your expense. Years ago, things were never like this. If you dropped your purse there was a good chance that someone will return it to you. There are still good people out there ready to help but these days you might be forgiven for thinking they are few and far between. For now, just keep your wits about you and your purse or wallet closer!



Celebrating 'Life in all it's Fullness' at Birchanger C of E (VC) Primary School!

This term, the children at Birchanger Primary School have truly embraced our vision of 'Life in all it's Fullness' with energy, joy, and curiosity. In the lead-up to Easter, the school was buzzing with a range of exciting activities.



A special themed day gave the children the chance to explore the Easter story in depth and learn how this important celebration is marked around the world. They also took part in a joyful Easter Service at St Mary's Church, led by Reverend Colin, who always brings the story to life in a way the children love.

On the last day of term, an eagerly anticipated Easter Egg Hunt brought smiles all round. But perhaps the most magical moment came with the arrival of the 'living eggs' in Starfish Class. After a few days of waiting, the children were thrilled to welcome 10 fluffy chicks into the world! Each class had the chance to help care for them, and many children even got to hold the chicks themselves.



After such a memorable and joy-filled term, the children were certainly ready for a well-earned rest—and are now back, refreshed and excited for all the adventures the summer term will bring.

Mrs Vessey – Headteacher
www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk

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what's on in the village...



May 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: 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.**

			1 Black Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	2 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	3 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: 13.00 Meat draw	4 St Mary's Church: 11.15 am Family Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
5 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	6 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	7 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	8 Green Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 80 th VE Day - Fish & Chip 21.30 Lt. Beacon	9 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	10 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: Evening 80 th VE Day Music Extra	11 St Mary's Church: 10.45 Morning Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
12 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	13 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	14 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	15 Black Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	16 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	17 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: 13.00 Meat draw Karaoke Night	18 St Mary's Church: 11.15 Family Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
19 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	20 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	21 Church hall: 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	22 Green Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	23 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	24 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: 21.00 Living The Dream - Live	25 St Mary's Church: 11.15 am Holy Communion Service BSSC: Sunday Roast
26 Church Hall: 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	27 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	28 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	29 Black Bin Church hall: 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance BSSC: 20.00 Bingo	30 Church Hall: 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	31 Church Hall: Apton Dance: 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin2 10.30 kids Latin 1 BSSC: 13.00 Meat Draw	



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Night Flights at Stansted Airport – The Regulations And The Reality *by Brian Ross*

Night flights are a major cause for complaint for those who live close to Stansted or beneath the flightpaths. Stansted operates 24/7 but, recognising the impact of aircraft noise at night on local communities, the Department for Transport (DfT) sets down restrictions on night flights.

The Basic Rules

The very noisiest aircraft are prohibited from operating between 11.00pm and 7.00am. During this time, the maximum permitted sound level for any individual aircraft is 84dBA (decibels) compared to 89 dBA permitted during the day. In addition, Stansted is limited to 13,700-night flights a year, comprising 8,100 during the summer season and 5,600 during the winter season* and the airport is allowed a 10% flexibility between these seasonal limits. However, this limit only applies to the 6½ hour “core” night period between 11.30pm and 6.00am. There is no limit on the number of night flights between 11.00pm and 11.30pm or between 6.00am and 7.00am – the so-called “shoulder” periods – and these are two of the busiest times of the day at Stansted for take-offs and landings. There is also a somewhat opaque and complicated ‘noise quota system’, as explained below.

Noise Quota System

The DfT also sets down a total night noise quota for Stansted of 7,960 points year (4,650 during the summer season and 3,310 during the winter season*). Each aircraft type is allocated a number of quota count (QC) points based on its certified noise level for take-off and landing. Thus, the noise quota limit is a combination of the number of flights and their noisiness.

For at least the past four years Manchester Airports Group (MAG) has been trying to persuade the DfT that the noise quota system provides enough protection for local communities and that there is no need for a numerical limit on night flights at Stansted (currently 13,700 a year). The DfT is expected to decide on this in 2027 and, if the numerical limits are removed, this could potentially lead to a huge increase in the number of night flights. The following example explains:

An elderly cargo aircraft might typically have a QC rating of 2 points on take-off whereas a new Ryanair aircraft could have a QC rating of just 0.125 points. In other words, the QC points system equates the noise impact of 16 Ryanair aircraft to just one elderly cargo aircraft. And, regardless of the night flights regulations, elderly (noisy) cargo aircraft are being progressively phased out.

Shoulder Periods

It is self-evident that a numerical limit is the only way to control the number of night flights, even though the current limit is far from perfect. Most importantly, it should apply to the full 8-hour night period (11.00pm to 7.00am) and not just the core 6½-hour period (11.30pm to 6.00am). As stated earlier, the two ‘shoulder’ periods, between 11.00pm and 11.30pm and between 6.00am and 7.00am, are two of the busiest times of the day for take-offs and landings.

Sleep disturbance is more prevalent during the shoulder periods because these are often the times when people are trying to begin a night’s sleep or, if woken up, could have difficulty getting back to sleep. The night flights restrictions are the same for Sundays as every other day.....

Dispensations

As an indication of where the Department for Transport’s loyalties lie, Stansted’s management are allowed, at their own discretion, to grant “dispensations” for night flights when a flight has encountered Air Traffic Control (ATC) problems or bad weather.

By granting a dispensation, the flight is disregarded for the purposes of both the numerical limit and the QC limit. Stansted management granted 1,495 discretionary dispensations last summer, in most cases claiming that the flight ‘strayed’ into the controlled night period only because of ATC and/or weather problems. Another 75 dispensations were granted due to medical emergencies or a government exemption making a total of 1,570 dispensations.

By comparison, Heathrow management granted a total of 528 dispensations last summer – only a third of the number granted by Stansted management, and Heathrow is three times bigger than Stansted. Gatwick is 50% bigger than Stansted but also granted far fewer dispensations. Stansted is no more prone to Air Traffic Control or weather problems than Heathrow or Gatwick, so why are Stansted management granting so many dispensations? The reason is simple. Ryanair, which dominates at Stansted, over-schedules its aircraft to try to get the most out of them from 6.00am to 11.30pm every day. Inevitably, delays occur and there is no slack in the Ryanair schedules to make up for delays. This is why the vast majority of dispensations granted by Stansted management relate to the arrival of Ryanair flights after 11.30pm, when scheduled to arrive before 11.30pm.

Some may feel that Ryanair, assisted by Stansted management, are “gaming the system”. In any event, the effect of this is to cause additional sleep disturbance for local residents.

The Reality

The current Department for Transport regulations limit Stansted to a maximum of 8,100-night flights during the summer season, which coincides with British Summer Time (BST). However, the reality is that last summer Stansted handled 12,253-night flights between 11.30pm and 6.00am (on average 60 per night) which is 50% above the maximum set by the DfT. We are told that this is within the rules and is legitimised by granting 1,570 dispensations and using a 10% flexibility to carry forward surplus flights and bring forward earlier allowances. Many may feel that the night flight regulations are tailored to meet the needs of the airport and airlines, with little regard for local residents! Some may feel strongly enough about this to drop an email to kemi.badenoch.mp@parliament.uk.

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Chairman's Report Continued from page 1

The UDC draft Local Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and it is hoped that a decision will be made in Spring 2026. Until a new Local Plan is in place Uttlesford continues to be open to speculative development.

The A120 roadworks were completed, way behind schedule, last July. However, there can be problems with vehicles on the A120 queuing back from the traffic lights blocking the exit from Birchanger Lane. Before the roadworks were completed, I asked for a yellow box junction and cameras to be installed but this was refused by Essex Highways. They thought the problem was caused by the traffic light phasing which would be adjusted. However, as the problem has persisted, Highways has at least installed a box junction, but no cameras!

The observant amongst you will have noticed that the village sign has been removed. It's been subject to sun, rain, frost and snow for 23 years and was deteriorating so it has been taken to a company in Norfolk to be refurbished.

We are also aware that the foundations of the war memorial are breaking down and so we are proposing to have the foundations repaired and the memorial cleaned. This seems appropriate as this year is the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Once again, we have asked that the club to light a beacon in commemoration.

Our present national government has decided that local government is going to change in Essex and a few other counties. At present the 4 tiers are, the national government, county council, district council and town and parish councils. County and district councils will soon disappear, and Essex will be divided into unitary authorities. I don't think any decision has been made yet regarding how many.

Finally, I remind you all again that we still have two vacancies on the Parish Council, so if you have a few hours a month to spare and would like to do something for our village, please think about becoming a Councillor. My thanks as always go to our Clerk and Councillors for their help and support over the last year.

Angie Driscoll - Chair, Birchanger Parish Council

The Changing Face of Birchanger Wood

Unfortunately, the time has come (as we knew it would) for us to deal with the impact of Ash dieback, a fungal disease affecting Ash trees in the wood. Sadly, in certain areas this will result in swathes of woodland being left devoid of trees. The areas most affected being along the banks of the stream and behind Birchwood School.

Ash sited away from the pathways, and therefore not posing any problem to the many who enjoy walking the wood, will be left to decay naturally, benefiting nature as a habitat for copious life forms. The diseased trees on the path edges will be dealt with by our group of volunteers during the course of the next five years, I do hope I am not being too ambitious regarding this time span!

Please be aware that in order to access the Ash, other species will ultimately suffer, the felling of healthy trees in this regard is an unavoidable and regrettable consequence that we have to accept. Please do feel free to call in to our compound near the water tower on a Saturday and have a chat, raising any concerns that you may have with regard to the proposed felling programme. We genuinely wish to harmonise and encourage patronage of the wood. We certainly do not want to alarm users when witnessing felling on such a dramatic scale.

Pat Forrest Warden The Birchanger Wood Trust

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

NEWS FROM THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

May is a lovely month at the Gardens, with flowers everywhere: alliums, foxgloves, irises, roses, to name a few. The Italian Garden beds will be lined with helianthemum. The herb border in the Walled Kitchen Garden will be in flower. There will still be blossom – deep pink hawthorn in the Glade; and the purple of the rhododendrons in the Japanese garden. There will be wildflowers too, the last of the bluebells at the beginning of the month, followed by orchids and of course the wafting cow parsley in Laburnum Walk.



Marking the end of the Second World War in Europe, 8 May 1945 was a hugely significant day for the airmen and women at Easton Lodge, as elsewhere. The 80th anniversary of VE Day falls on a Thursday so the Gardens will be open for those who wish to reflect on the significance of this day in a tranquil environment. Our history of the airfield will be on display, with photos and stories of those involved. This Thursday as on other Thursdays, the Gardens are open from 11.00-3.00pm, with hot and cold drinks and homemade cakes available from our refreshment's kiosk. On Thursdays, visitors can chat to our volunteer gardeners and buy our seasonal produce.

Our 18 May Sunday Open Day will focus on Easton Lodge's Tudor history. Queen Elizabeth I, granted the estate at Little Easton to Henry Maynard in 1590 and he owned a lot of other land in the local neighbourhood too. Our Archivists will present a special display and there will be a range of fun activities for children, including archery for the older/stronger ones, provided by White Dragon Archery, and making cordage bangles with Discover Bushcraft. 'Colchester Waits' will play Tudor music on shawms, bagpipes, fiddles, and recorders. There will be Tudor foods to sample and a range of stalls.

There is more information and links to advance booking of tickets on our website: www.eastonlodge.co.uk/event/may-open-day-our-tudor-story.

Jill Goldsmith



The Hundred Parishes Society

When is a Barn Not a Barn?

A barn is essential for a working farm, to store produce, tools and machinery and to house livestock. The Hundred Parishes has many fine examples of ancient barns which are still in use today, albeit sometimes for a purpose not envisaged when they were built. Some have been converted into homes while others have quite varied new uses.

In 1994, Thorley church purchased a dilapidated 16th-century barn which, following restoration, opened for community use as St Barnabas Centre. At Duddenhoe End, the thatched Hamlet Church started life as a barn.



Ashdon and Westmill village halls both began life as barns in the 17th century.



Great Bardfield and Great Saling each have an ancient barn that has been converted into a retail outlet with café, respectively The Blue Egg and Timbers.



In Chrishall, the Red Cow pub offers accommodation in the adjacent 500-year-old thatched barn.

In Little Easton, the Countess of Warwick converted one of her barns into the Barn Theatre. It was used by many famous performers of the early 1900s and still occasionally serves that purpose, on other days being part of a tearoom and events venue called Little Easton Manor.

In Great Bardfield, a Grade-I listed, 16th-century brick barn at Great Lodge now serves as the Anne of Cleves Barn wedding venue.

In Widdington, Grade I-listed Priors Hall Barn is a fine example of a medieval barn, dating from the 14th century and now owned by English Heritage. It is said that 400 oak trees were used in its construction. The large doors on either side could be opened for threshing, with the draught blowing the husks away from the grain. Priors Hall Barn is free to visit, open at weekends Apr. to Sept.



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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
Legal Services	Nockolds	0345 6460406
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
Printing Services	M&B Printers	01371 874695
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

4 th May	Family Service with Pam Lee
11 th May	Morning Prayer with Pam Lee
18 th May	Family Service with Pam Lee
25 th May	Holy Communion with Revd Colin Fairweather

Church News

By the time that you see this we will already have held our Annual Parish Meeting, and hopefully I will remain in post as Churchwarden. If there is however any change, I will let you know.

Sadly, I need to report that henceforth we will only be having one Holy Communion service each month as Revd Helen Flack will no longer be with us on the second Sunday of the month. For as long as we are able, we will, of course, continue to have regular services to which everyone is welcome but, looking at things from a financial point of view, the outlook is bleak.

For some years now annual income has been steadily decreasing mainly due to the reduced numbers of people attending regular services. In 2023 income from services, fundraising and the tearoom was £8262 but in 2024 only £6043 came in. Outgoings for both years were around £17,000 and it is obvious that this situation is unsustainable as we are having to draw down on what little reserves the church has for essentials as insurance, electricity, and our parish share. If things do not improve, we will not be able to use the heating in church nor can we continue to maintain the churchyard or carry out any essential repairs. This is your church that we are speaking about and if you do not help financially then sometime in the next couple of years it will close. If we all pull together then we can keep it open.

So, I ask you once again, to please either come to church once or twice a month to show your support or at the very least, set up a direct debit for a monthly payment to the church (if we all give £5 a month that will secure our historic building). The bank details are:

Name – Birchanger Parochial Church Council

Sort code – 203698

Account – 50160024

The choice is yours – support the church or lose it?

Dates for the diary

Tuesday 27 th May at 10.30am	First History Talk in Church
Tuesday 24 th June at 10.30am	Second History Talk in Church

Prayer for the Month

Loving Lord, help us to keep your church here in Birchanger alive and well, open to all who your support, compassion, and love.

Focus our minds on you so that we dedicate our lives to your service today and always.

Amen

Pam Lee (Church Warden)

Tel: 07702 171744

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Village Church Hall



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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.

Printers: M&B Printers Tel: 01371 874 695. Email: sales@mbdesignprint.com. Website: www.mbdesignprint.com

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