Birchanger Village Magazine

August 2025 Issue 271



Tens of Thousands of Solar Panels on the Green Belt?



Planning application UTT/25/1742/FUL Land At Parsonage Farm, Forest Hall Road, Stansted, Essex.

This application is to build a "temporary" solar farm on Parsonage Farm which is in the green belt. The 48-hectare site would have 41,500 solar panels and various buildings to house batteries etc. Electricity produced would serve the industrial site on the north of Stansted Airport, so absolutely no benefit to Birchanger or Stansted Mountfitchet.

The site has been used for agricultural purposes for hundreds of years and the majority of it is graded as very good agricultural land. However, the applicant suggests it should be downgraded from Green Belt to Grey Belt in order that it can be built on. The panels and buildings would be removed after 40 years. However, as the site previously had buildings on it, the land could be deemed Grey Belt, and no doubt new houses would then be built on the site.

There is of course also concern about the glint and glare from the solar panels which could be extremely dangerous to aircraft and vehicles on the M11. Full details of the application can be found on the UDC planning portal using the reference number above. If you wish to comment on this application, you must do so by August 11th.

Comment by email to: planning@uttlesford.gov.uk
In writing to: Uttlesford District Council, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

You must quote the application number of UTT/25/1742/ FUL, the address of the site, and give your full name and Contact details.

Airport Passenger Numbers to Rise?

Comments From Parish Council Regarding Planning Application UTT/25/1542/FUL Stansted Airport

Stansted Airport's proposal to increase the yearly passenger cap from 43 million to 51 million passengers will have huge implications for the community and local area infrastructure. Birchanger village is a small village situated 1.9 miles northeast of Bishops Stortford and 2 miles west of the runway of Stansted Airport. As a village so close to the runway, we are well-qualified to comment upon our close neighbour.

Noise:
Stansted's disingenuous statement that "Our plans are based on making the best use of what we have – a single runway within the same boundaries and no more flights than currently allowed" may sound reasonable but the shenanigans around night flights, for example, indicate just how manipulative Stansted can be. Aircraft noise is a constant during the day and now, already, more frequently during the night period between 11.00pm and 6am. Stansted alleges that the increase in passenger numbers will not result in the number of flights rising beyond 274k aircraft movements per annum. The reality is that Stansted are not using their full movement quota so there will be an increase in flights.

Sleep disturbance is endured by those living in Birchanger and surrounding areas. The issues that concern the residents are not only the noise of the aircraft once airborne but also the take power decibel level required on the ground to initiate the take-off run. At full power, this noise can be up to 140 ~~DB's~~ while running down the runway until the aircraft takes off. This noise is exacerbated by the weather and can happen throughout the day and night.
Aircraft operators could use the flex thrust on the take-off run, rather than a short run on full engine power. *Ctd. on page 5*





Editors Letter Box

Dear Readers,

Out With The Old And In With The New

A New Magazine Team – At Last!

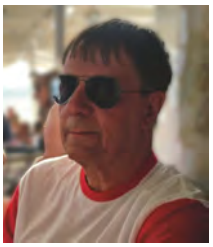
After 9 years as editor of the magazine, I am finally hanging up my laptop. Well not quite, I will of course use it occasionally for private use. However, I am standing down from the magazine after the August edition together with Ken Wheatley who has been our stalwart treasurer for 22 years. Elizabeth Godwin, who has been the writer of the 'Village News' page and later acting as chair since 2002 will also be retiring as soon as the new team have found her replacement.

Yes, we have, at least in part, finally found our replacements and I would like to take this opportunity in introducing you to them now. John McArthur will take the reins and position of Writer and Editor, and Malcolm Roberts will assume the job of Treasurer, IT Support and Advertising Media Controller.



John McArthur

John is 58 years old and has just retired from working in Finance since he was 17. He has lived in Birchanger with his wife Liz and four kids since 2008. In that time, he has held various roles in the village as a social club committee member for 10 years and a Parish Councillor for two years. "Our family love Birchanger and my aim with the magazine is to add some new features and try to get villagers more involved with it."



Malcolm Roberts

As an IT professional, Malcolm worked for a city insurance company and then for a Bishop's Stortford law firm before retiring two years ago. Originally from London, he has lived in Birchanger for 26 years with his wife Christine (who happens to be the 'Head Distributor' for the magazine). "I'm looking forward to working with John and wish to congratulate Liz, Ken, Peter and Ed Gilbey for running the magazine for all these years."

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as editor and the occasional challenges in putting together the stories and history about Birchanger. I have lived in Birchanger for some 20 years and both my wife Cheryl and I have enjoyed every minute of this wonderful little picturesque village and its inhabitants. I cannot see any possibility of us moving anywhere else in the foreseeable future.

Finaly, I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to our team; our writers, subscribers, advertisers, and printers - past and present. My special thanks go to our reporters and proofreaders, without whom the magazine simply wouldn't exist. And to our door-to-door distributors and Head Distributor Christine Roberts for all their hard work in circulating our publication to the village in all weathers. I wish John and Malcolm all the very best success for the future and hope they enjoy their time as much as I have.

So, it's 'goodbye from me and goodbye from him' and welcome to John and Malcolm who I am sure will put their own personal stamp on future publications.

Peter Sampson

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*

Join us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/birchanger/

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VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin

Thinking of Riding Your Electric Scooter on the Roads This Summer?



Think again! It may be tempting to ride around the lanes, but it is illegal to use an electric scooter on public roads, lanes, or pavements. They can only be used on private land with the landowner's permission. Electrical scooters (also known as **e-scooters)** come under the category of 'powered transporters'. This covers a range of personal transport devices that are powered by a motor. E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles under the Road Traffic Act 1988 External Link. This means the rules that apply to motor vehicles, also apply to e-scooters. If you choose to rent an e-scooter in an approved area, you must hold the correct driving licence, have insurance (the rental companies provide this when you hire from them) and meet the minimum age limit. So, those with e-scooters who plan to whizz down the lanes this summer, think again. That little trip could be very costly with fines of up to £300 and 6 points on your licence. Rural police will be patrolling!

Would You Meet the Man Who Robbed You?

Both victims and offenders are now invited to meet each other under a new mediation scheme run by the Essex Restorative and Mediation Scheme. The meeting will not go ahead unless both parties agree, even if one of the parties is very keen to participate. Despite perhaps the lack of perpetrators participation, the Essex Restoration and Mediation Service will work with the victim to make sure that their views are communicated to the offender. Many victims find the service restorative even without the presence of the offender. Victims often feel violated when a crime has been committed against them. Using this mediation service can help to restore victim's confidence and help them come to terms with the crime that has been committed against them. If necessary, they also can help them through the court process. It can be an intimidating experience for most victims especially if the victim see the offender for the first time.

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 20th August 6.45 pm at the Club for a game of Petanque followed by Fish and Chips

bags@birchanger.com

Rosemary: 01279 814678 - Liz Turner: 07473 508056

Crime in North Essex is Down

If you have just been involved in a crime committed against you it is probably cold comfort to be told that crime in our area is down. In our area there were 227 ~~less~~ offences of vehicle theft than in the same period last year. This in part may be due to the new security systems used mainly in brand new cars or the increased use of Faraday pouches and boxes among the car driving population. The figures are still too high. Criminals still break into houses to find car keys and they are using signal jammers to block Wi-Fi which means that Wi-Fi , CCTV, and doorbell cameras are rendered useless. Cameras, alarms, and door-bell video will not record. Hard wired equipment is the safest option. Always report anything that seems a bit suspicious immediately on 101 or to Essex Police. At the same time report it on the Birchanger 'Residents Facebook Page'. For example, perhaps you see someone walking through the village looking at houses or vehicles just a bit too closely. It could be your report which helps to prevent or solve a crime.

No Car Insurance!

Do you have car insurance? With most of us that is a given although the costs are astronomic, so it is not really surprising that people are choosing to 'forget' their motor insurance. Big mistake! You may be driving along when out of the blue a police car stops you. You were not speeding so why have they stopped you? The police officer makes no reference to your speed. He wants to see your motor insurance, which you don't seem to be able to find. Next thing you know, the car is on a trailer disappearing in the distance and you are left phoning a friend to come and take you home. What with the towing of your car, a fine and a new insurance premium, is it really worth the risk? To protect yourself and others, please get insurance. There are various schemes out there, but motor insurance is a necessity and the consequences without it are just far too high.



The End of Cervical Cancer Maybe in Sight

Thanks to the development of a new vaccine known as the HPV vaccine, cervical cancer could become a disease of the past. Studies here in England have shown that the new vaccine stops 90% of cervical cancer nationally. The HPV vaccine also protects against other cancers which are linked to the same HPV virus such as mouth cancer, vaginal and anal cancer, to name but a few of the nasties. Researchers around the world are working on various vaccines against a wide range of cancers and at the same time using better technologies to improve existing HPV vaccine. The future looks brighter for all those with cancer. New vaccines are being developed all the time. Gradually, the danger to human life is being reduced and there is a very real expectation that in the not-so-distant future cancer will finally be easily cured and eventually eliminated across the world.



It's A Dogs Life – Or Is It?

Not all dogs are man's best friend and not everyone is a trusted owner. One look at the dog wardens' records can be pretty frightening. Dogs attacking children, dogs biting without provocation, owners seemingly content to let their dog attack other dogs and leaving the scene without any attempt at an apology or at controlling their dog. Then there are owners who leave their dog unattended with babies or young children who are seemingly oblivious to the possibility that their dog may get fed up with a child's behaviour and suddenly turn on them. Hopefully in such a case it's just a nip whilst usurping the dog's floor space, but of course it can be much worse. Dogs make great companions providing their owners remember that they are still animals with wild animal instincts and that even friendly dogs can turn when provoked.

Have You Had an Outpatient Hospital Appointment Lately?

Have you ever gone online to book an appointment only to find your computer isn't registered with the NHS or 'computer says no'! It took me about six attempts to register my computer as the server simply would not take my details. I then wasted a lot of time on the phone and online until I finally managed to make it work. There are help lines, but you find yourself in a long queue before you actually access a voice. My problems were eventually solved but not before a lot of frustration and a few choice words to a computerised voice! Perhaps you need more patience and allow much more time when you attempt to log in. I did notice that Princess Alexandra Hospital's website was a bit easier to use than Addenbrookes. Hospitals have to realise that older people never had iPads, mobile phones, or computers when they were at school and jumping blind into the computer revolution is a problem for them. At their age it is harder to learn too.

Summery of Birchanger Parish Council meeting Tuesday 1st July 2025

1386. Planning

UTT/25/1542/GFUL – London Stansted Airport

Airfield works. The response from Birchanger Parish Council has been submitted to Uttlesford District Council and can be seen on page 1 of this magazine. Its also listed on https://www.birchanger.com/meetings under "Council Meetings".

UTT/24/0642/FUL – Land South of Birchanger Lane – Appeal

A representation from Birchanger Parish Council has been sent to Uttlesford District Council. The final date for submissions was 30th June 2025. The representation can be viewed on the Uttlesford Planning website.

1387. Village Green

The Parish Council' solicitors Longmores have submitted to the Parish Council a proposed response to Mrs Dobb's solicitors. It was agreed to authorise the response to be sent. The Millenium Oak now has a full Tree Preservation Order.

1389. Allotments/Recreation Ground

Recreation Ground

GS has applied for a MAGS Flagship Award. He is presenting an application for £25000. This should be decided by August. He is also intending to apply for grants from the Essex Community Fund and the Playground Community. There are also potential grant sources which can be approached.

GS has completed repair and preparation of the wood parts of the roundabout. Some of the metallic parts require painting but it has been too hot to continue. This should be completed shortly. The Parish Council would once again like to thank GS for all the work he has done.

Allotments

Laura is to ask plot holders to ensure that their plots are kept in good order. LP will draft an email to be sent to all plot holders pointing out their responsibilities for the upkeep of their plots.

1390. Reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr Ray Gooding (RG).

RG is trying to get Community Safety Scheme funding to address the safety issues at the junction of Birchanger Lane and the B1383. Some work in Birchwood still remains to be completed. RG is asking for a traffic count to be implemented with costing allocated to the Revenue Account. A "no entry" designation for Tot Lane has not yet been agreed. It is hoped that some S106 funds could be allocated.

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Airport Passenger Numbers to Rise?

Ctd from Page 1

Most modern aircraft have the flex power option in their operational flight manual and that option is presented to the captain when the flight plan ~~in~~ uploaded to the aircraft. This is an option rarely exercised. The runway at Stansted Airport is 10,000 feet long but most aircraft do not need that length of tarmac to get airborne even when fully laden, so aircraft tend take the shorter take off option using full power! If aircraft were to use most or more of the 10,000 feet runway available using the engine flex option, they would not need full power to attain the required speed to reach rotation and take off safely. This would significantly reduce the noise of departing aircraft.

Stansted is currently allowed 13,700-night flights a year between the hours of 11.30pm and 6.00am. By comparison, Heathrow, which is three times bigger than Stansted, is allowed just 5,800-night flights a year. Crucially, Airport management can grant 'dispensations' where flights are delayed by weather or Air Traffic Control problems. Dispensations do not count against the night flights limit. Stansted (disproportionally) granted 1,200 dispensations Summer 2023 whereas Heathrow granted only 462.

Airlines may be ordering bigger, more efficient planes, but this may not result in a reduction in noise particularly as Stansted is currently the third busiest cargo airport in the UK and that cargo flights typically operate outside peak passenger hours or during the night. Older planes are used. Such flights have greater potential for noise disturbance. The increase in passenger flights does not reflect a consequent reduction in night flights. It will mean more noise, contrary to the Stansted assertion.

There is also a separate issue of aircraft using high powered reverse thrust, day and night, to slow and stop to enable the aircraft to leave the runway at the first rapid exit taxiway (RET). The more planes using the runway, potentially, the more times this will happen. This high-power noisy action by flight crews is not required for the safety of the aircraft during a normal landing run, it is only a requirement of the airport air traffic controller to get the runway empty as quickly as possible to allow other aircraft to depart or arrive. If flight crews are instructed to leave the runway further down at the last RET or end of the taxiway there would be no need for reverse thrust. The noise generated by reverse thrust can be as high as the noise produced by aircraft taking off. As close neighbours, we would encourage Stansted Airport's operators to use the furthest RET on the runway during the landing phase to further reduce the noise of the landing aircraft. Pressure to reduce the use of reverse thrust would also assist in mitigating the issue. Little of this noise is captured by the noise monitors situated outside the curtilage of the airfield and on the direct standard instrument departures and arrivals indicated by the Jeppesen navigation charts. But this noise, is sorely heard, by those in the community surrounding the airport.

Transport:

Roads: Highways infrastructure will be unable to cope with an increase in road traffic, it is already struggling, particularly at peak periods. Villagers already find it difficult to exit the village at points in the day. Local bus services struggle to provide a regular service, due to road closures, diversions, repairs etc. That is, if they indeed exist. The Birchanger community does not have high unemployment but does have pockets of deprivation. The unreliability, or inconvenient timetables, of public transport means that a significant proportion of residents that work at the airport are reliant on private vehicles to travel to work. Many airport jobs, particularly those that attract lower salaries, operate on a shift basis. Personal transport is the only way to get to work.

Enhanced employment opportunities, due to an increase of passenger numbers, will only compound this issue. The M11 Stansted junction upgrade was completed in 2024. Transport pressures are such that gridlock is the new normal. Motorway incidents already impact upon the airport with passengers missing their flights. Traffic lights have been incorporated in a subsidiary roundabout on the A120 feeding the M11 to improve the flow of traffic for those endeavouring to exit the motorway. These measures are already proving inadequate.



The interconnecting roads, A120, A1250 and Birchanger, struggle to approach and negotiate the roundabout at peak times. There are times when it is impossible to exit the village. There needs to be a M11 Stansted junction 8B for southbound traffic aiming for the airport. Traffic from the Midlands is very poorly served by the M11 junctions 8 or 8A. Whilst this will not directly advantage Birchanger residents there could be a consequent reduction in traffic in the area if the airport traffic were able to divert and not struggle around the "heaving" M11 roundabout.

Parking:

The cost of parking, long or short term, at the airport is significant. Stansted pick-up and drop-off costs are the most expensive of all the "London" airports. This works to Stansted's advantage as it encourages the use of public transport to the airport. The downside to this, is that Stansted is, effectively encouraging fly parking in nearby villages. Parking in a nearby village improves Stansted's transport data ~~for~~ fly parking is not part of the date gathering nor analysis by the airport. Superficially, Stansted supports anti-fly parking measures by the provision of signage, but the reality is that fly parking in the community supports the Stansted eco credentials.



Trains:

The London-Stansted Express service works well. There is not a comparable service from Cambridge to Stansted. Travellers from the Midlands contend with the local, much slower, train service. Stansted Airport has created a problem, increased passenger numbers will compound issues, yet the airport is doing little to resolve. Importantly, those who live in the locality and wish to use the train pay extra for the privilege. Passengers currently pay a premium for journeys that originate from the Airport. Return ticket prices to Cambridge and London are, on average, 25% more expensive from the airport. Season tickets from the airport are on average 10% more expensive.

In summary, our contiguous near neighbour is costly to Birchanger, the community and the environment.

What's on in the Village...



August 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: 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 **Church Hall:** 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	2 **Church Hall:** **Apton Dance:** 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 **BSSC:** 13.00 Meat draw Free Quiz Night	3 **St Mary's Church:** 11.15 am Family Service **BSSC:** Sunday Roast
4 **Church Hall:** 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	5 **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	6 **Church hall:** 10.00 Tai Chi 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	7 **Black Bin** **Church hall:** 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance **BSSC:** 20.00 Bingo	8 **Church Hall:** 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	9 **Church Hall:** **Apton Dance:** 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 **BSSC:** 13.00 Meat draw Wild West Night	10 **St Mary's Church:** 10.45 Matins Service **BSSC:** Sunday Roast
11 **Church Hall:** 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	12 **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	13 **Church hall:** 10.00 Tai Chi 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	14 **Green Bin** **Church hall:** 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance **BSSC:** 20.00 Bingo	15 **Church Hall:** 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	16 **Church Hall:** **Apton Dance:** 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 **BSSC:** 13.00 Meat draw	17 **St Mary's Church:** 11.15 Family Service **BSSC:** Sunday Roast
18 **Church Hall:** 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	19 **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	20 **Church hall:** 10.00 Tai Chi 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance BSSC 18:45 BAGS	21 **Black Bin** **Church hall:** 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance **BSSC:** 20.00 Bingo	22 **Church Hall:** 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	23 **Church Hall:** **Apton Dance:** 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin2 10.30 kids Latin 1 **BSSC:** 13.00 Meat Draw	24 **St Mary's Church:** 11.15 am Baptism Service **BSSC:** Sunday Roast
25 **Church Hall:** 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	26 **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	27 **Church hall:** 10.00 Tai Chi 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance ~~18.45 **BAGS**~~	28 **Green Bin** **Church hall:** 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance **BSSC:** 20.00 Bingo	29 **Church Hall:** 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	30 **Church Hall:** **Apton Dance:** 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin2 10.30 kids Latin 1 **BSSC:** 13.00 Meat Draw	31 **St Mary's Church:** 11.15 am Family Service **BSSC:** Sunday Roast

BIRCHANGER SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

WHAT'S ON AT THE CLUB





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

Scoutmaster Reg Wisbey Dies

On Thursday 3rd July I attended the funeral of Reg Wisbey at Cam Valley Crematoria. The funeral was well attended by friends and family and from representatives of The Hatfield Forest Scout Group who now have their headquarters in Wood Lane Birchanger.

Reg was the original Scoutmaster for the 1st Birchanger troop that he founded in 1965. I was a member of the Stansted troop at the time having been in the Cubs there since 1962. Reg approached me at one of my Stansted meets and asked if I'd like to join a new troop he was starting in Birchanger. I agreed and he asked me the names of other Birchanger boys who might be interested in joining. Reg explained that because there was no Scout hut in Birchanger we would be meeting in Farnham. He explained transport to Farnham would be provided.

A week or two later, (it was in the Autumn) myself and about six others were collected and taken to Farnham where we found the Scout hut behind the Village Hall. I became Patrol leader of the Otters! When we arrived, we found that Reg had a helper this was another Reg, Reg Waterman and in addition, there were three boys from Farnham. I was the only one who had a uniform, but that changed quickly.



Membership of the Scout troop led to Church Parades, regular camps and competition camps in Hatfield Forest, and memorably a week on a narrow boat on the Shropshire Union Canal. We were taught useful Scouting Skills, how to tie various knots, map reading, first aid and how to set and light a fire using no more than three matches. Reg personally taught me how to cook Sausages without burning them!

Reg gave his life to his community; as a church Warden, Scout leader and the cricket club that played at Hazel End, and even as a barman at the Village Hall. Reg eventually became a local District Commissioner for The Scouting Association. He died at home on June 6th Surrounded by his family after a long illness. He was 92 years old. My thoughts go to his widow Betty (they had been married for 70 years) and to his son Guy who cared for him in his last years.

Ed Gilbey

Shining Bright: Celebrating a joyful end to the school year!

As we come to the end of a vibrant summer term at Birchanger C of E Primary School, it's been a true joy to see our children embracing *Life in all its Fullness* in every corner of school life. From the excitement and independence shown on the Year 5 and 6 residential, to the creativity and confidence bursting from the Key Stage 2 production of *Beauty and the Beast,* this term has been filled with memorable moments.



We celebrated our wonderful Year 6's with a joyful summer party, full of ice cream, dancing, and laughter, before sending them off with a moving Leavers' Service centred on the theme *"Shine Your Light."* What a term it has been—rich in learning, friendship, and celebration.



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

u3a Stansted Mountfitchet

We're delighted to announce a new group activity following an approach from Stansted Bowling Club: lawn bowls. The group will meet twice a month, on the first and third Monday afternoons, throughout the summer. Sessions will take place at the Club's facilities, with some of the members from the Bowling Club kindly offering guidance and support.

Our Annual General Meeting took place at the start of June's monthly meeting. The current committee remains unchanged, though it was noted that several members will be retiring at next year's AGM. We will therefore be seeking nominations for a number of roles. As a member-led organisation, the u3a relies on everyone playing their part to help sustain and shape our future.

In August, we look forward to a talk by Paul Chambers from Touchpoint. Paul, a Stansted resident for over 20 years, is a passionate advocate for community spirit. He sees Touchpoint as a valuable way to enhance the support we offer one another and will update us on its latest developments and initiatives. The meeting will take place on Thursday 21st August in St Theresa's Parish Centre, High Lane, at 1.30 for 2.00pm. Visitors and prospective members are always welcome.

The Garden Group will visit Thundridge Hill House, Ware, on Monday 11th August. The 2.5-acre garden features a wide variety of plants, shrubs, and roses, including a distinctive "yellow only" bed.

Finally, understanding modern technology can be daunting, so the u3a Trust has launched a national AI Team. This group aims to help all 430,000 members better understand Artificial Intelligence, its meaning, uses, benefits, and potential risks. An online library, updated daily, offers articles on AI's real-world applications. A rolling programme of talks, both online and in person, is also available to members across the UK.

Susan Sedgebeer



THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

Our volunteers have been working hard to add to the range of garden games we provide, ready for visitors on Thursdays through the school summer holidays and our family fun day on Sunday 17 August. We reckon croquet is a game for all ages (it can be gentle or aggressive and brutal to opponents, if playing all the rules!). And we all enjoy Connect 4, draughts, bean bag games and others.

Together with a lazy stroll around the Gardens, a picnic, a cuppa and a piece of cake, and the chance to buy vegetables for supper, we hope we have plenty on offer for relaxed days out in August. On Sunday 17 August we will be joined by the Little Easton Alpacas! Adult entry on Thursdays is £5.50 and on Sunday (advance tickets) is £6.00, with free entry for children under 16 years old.



As you would expect, the Gardens are parched, but there is still lots to see and enjoy! The lavender hedges love the heat and sunshine and have been welcoming lots of butterflies and an occasional hummingbird hawk moth. The roses are also very happy. The new rose bed in the walled kitchen garden is covered in flower, albeit not on long branches and the perfume from the more established bushes wafts to visitors on a still day. The Italian Garden borders have long included drought tolerant shrubs and perennials, such as Phlomis russeliana, Crambe cordifolia, Hylotelephium and ornamental grasses, but we have added further dry area loving plants, including white Gaura lindheimera Whirling Butterflies, Cool Cream Salvia greigii and orange/yellow Helenium Sahin's Early Flowerer.

Our volunteers have been watering vulnerable plants and trees as often as they can. And our vegetables are thriving, so we have a steady stream of beans, beetroot, carrots, chard, courgettes and spinach to sell to visitors. Our soft fruit crop is keeping our jammers busy, and the plum trees are groaning with fruit to come. We look forward to welcoming you. For more information go to www.eastonlodge.co.uk

Jill Goldsmith



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The Hundred Parishes Society

Monasteries, Convents, Abbeys And Priories

Before the 'dissolution of the monasteries', instigated in 1536 by King Henry VIII, the Hundred Parishes area had its fair share of religious houses – monasteries, convents, abbeys and priories. The remains of some can still be seen today.

Tilty Abbey is one. It was founded for Cistercian monks in 1153 and prospered mainly due to the wool trade before being dissolved. In 1220 a chapel was built outside the abbey gates for use by visitors. The chapel survives and today functions as Tilty's parish church. Little remains of the other abbey buildings but the site can be visited; interpretation boards inform the visitor and give an artist's impression of what the site would have looked like.



Little Dunmow Priory was founded in 1104 and was home to Augustinian monks until the Dissolution. Most of the priory church was demolished but the southern aisle survived. It is now used as the parish church.



Several of our larger hospitality venues were developed on sites of former religious houses: Hanbury Manor in Thundridge was once Poles Convent, Down Hall in Hatfield Heath evolved from a 14th-century monastery, while Leez Priory in Felsted became the home of Richard Rich through his leading role in dissolving the monasteries.



In Saffron Walden, Audley End House was built on the site of Walden Abbey, founded in the 12th century and whose lands were granted in 1538 to Sir Thomas Audley, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor. The present house was built some 60 years later by his grandson Thomas Howard.



While we tend to think of religious houses as a bygone era, Pleshey has one that is relatively new and active: its House of Retreat was founded as a convent in the early 1900s and became the first Diocesan Retreat House in England in 1927.

Ken McDonald, Secretary www.hundredparishes.org.uk

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Village Services and Activities

Service	Contact	Telephone No.
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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
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Landscaping Services	Mark Taylor	07941 357934
Launderette	Ian Kennedy	01279 866183
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Line Dancing	Shelley	01279 864781
Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
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Parish Clerk	Keith Williams	01279 814473
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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



Village Church Hall

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For bookings or further information please contact:
Manager: Cat Roberson
Telephone: 07475 092 658

St. Mary's Church



Church services - 11.15 am

3rd August Family Service with Pam Lee
10th August Matins with Hugh Mascetti
17th August Family with Pam Lee
24th August Baptism service with Revd Colin Fairweather
31st August Family Service with Pam Lee

Church News

Other than our regular Sunday services, it is now a rare thing for there to be other events to celebrate in church, so we truly blessed to be able to welcome Chris and Katie plus their family to our service on the 24th August 2025 for the baptism of their son, Luca. Baptisms are special occasions and we really do try to make them memorable for everyone.

On Tuesday the 26th August we will be hosting our fourth History talk in church. Putting together sufficient information to make our talks interesting for everyone, has been a monumental effort but Pam says that she has enjoyed all the research as well as presenting information to those who have visited our church to find out about how Birchanger came to exist. We have been visited by U3a groups and members of Essex Organ Restoration society too!

The August talk will probably be our last one for this year so do come along if you can. Alternatively, if your family has a long history of being in this place and you have any historical information that you might like to share, please get in touch with Pam as soon as you can

Dates for the diary

26th August 10.30am History talk in church.
6th September Village fete
27th October Essex Organ association visit
19th December Evening Carol Service

Prayer for the month

Lord Jesus Christ, ~~every~~ wherever we go, we are surrounded by violence, hatred, envy and disruption to our lives and we are worried about our safety and that of our families and friends. We pray that you will come into our troubled world bringing peace for all.

Amen

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

Village Church Hall



For information and bookings contact:
Manager: Cat Roberson
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Printers: M&B Printers Tel: 01371 874 695. Email: sales@mbdesignprint.com. Website: www.mbdesignprint.com
Editor: Peter Sampson Tel: 0781 7904333 Email: magazine@birchanger.com. **Chairman:** Elizabeth Godwin. **Treasurer:** Ken Wheatley.