

**Draft Minutes of Birchanger Parish Council meeting**  
**held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7.30 pm.**  
**In Birchanger Village Hall**

**Present:** Angie Driscoll (AD) – Chair  
Sally Taylor (ST)  
Linda Pocklington (LP)  
Peter Sampson (PS)  
Keith Edgeworth (KE)

0 members of the public  
Keith Williams (KW) – Parish Clerk

**1228. Chairman’s Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

**1229. Apologies for Absence**

Geof Driscoll (GD)  
George Taylor (GT)

**1230. Declarations of Interest**

Parish Clerk in respect of planning application item 6.1: UTT/24/1121/FUL

**1231. Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.**

None

**1232. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 had been previously circulated. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

**1233. Planning**

**1. UTT/24/1121/FUL – 327 Birchanger Lane, Birchanger**  
Retrospective application for items in garden area.

The Three Willows is an asset to Birchanger. Not only do many villagers, including Councillors, dine and relax there, but it is also a place of employment for some residents.

The Parish Council have no objection to the gazebos or dining pods. However, we are aware of the considerable disturbance to a neighbouring property due to the siting of the play equipment and the row of tables nearest to the hedge at the far end of the garden.

The garden gets extremely busy particularly during the summer and on holiday weekends. The noise from the customers is impacting on the residents of the neighbouring property, together with children climbing to the top of the Canyon Clubhouse where they can see over the hedge into the neighbouring house and garden. It has also been known for children to throw objects over the hedge and even crawl through it.

**[2024/287]**

Repositioning the play equipment and the row of tables, together with noise reducing fencing, would help alleviate the noise, invasion of privacy and stress that has been caused to the neighbouring residents.

## **2. UTT/24/1282/FUL – Land North of Birchanger Lane**

Provision of additional six pitches and communal amenity space.

Birchanger Parish Council strongly object to this planning application.

The site is within the Green Belt. The NPPF clearly states “ Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.” There are no very special circumstances which would justify approval of this application and is another attempt to destroy the Green Belt around Birchanger.

In 2018 the applicants were given planning permission to erect stables on an adjoining area of Green Belt. However, stables were not built but instead caravans were illegally moved onto the site. Enforcement action was taken but the PINS Inspector found there were very special circumstances, specifically the health and educational needs of the traveller families, and the appeal was allowed, with certain conditions. See APP/C1570/C/18/3219384

One of these conditions was not met within the prescribed timescale. A retrospective planning application was made which was refused by UDC. At appeal the PINS Inspector confirmed there were very special circumstances, as before, and the appeal was allowed with extra conditions around noise pollution. See UTT/22/3094/FUL APP/C1570/C/23/3324961

In both cases only the six named traveller families residing on the site would be allowed to remain there.

The Appeal Decision, dated January 23, 2024 paragraph 13 states “it is clear that there is harm to the green belt from the introduction of mobile homes, touring caravans, hardstanding, fencing, gates, vehicles and domestic paraphernalia.”

This latest application is for 6 more pitches on a site only approved for 6 and would clearly be against conditions 1, 3 & 5, listed in the January 2024 Appeal Decision. Indeed we have to ask why it is listed as a stand alone planning application and the UDC planning portal shows no related cases when clearly there are.

There are no special circumstances to allow this Green Belt intrusion. There are no families already living on these proposed pitches. Indeed the site is extremely uneven and would need major work carried out to level it, destroying more flora and fauna. Furthermore, there is an attenuation pond in the area between the proposed bund and the A120 installed as part of the flood prevention element of the roadworks. This pond, being so close to the proposed site, would very dangerous to any children or animals allowed to run around unsupervised

The green belt at this point in Uttlesford is a very narrow strip of land and avoids coalescence between neighbouring communities and counties. Indeed if this application is approved it will bring Birchanger, Essex, within almost touching distance of Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire.

The onus is upon UDC to provide pitches elsewhere in the district, not in Green Belt, to provide at least the additional pitches applied for and thus avoid this situation occurring repeatedly.

Birchanger Parish Council urge UDC to refuse this application and protect the Green Belt.

**[2024/288]**

### 3. UTT/24/0642/FUL-Land south of Birchanger Lane

Proposed erection of 9 new dwellings.

The Parish Council is awaiting confirmation of the decision date.

#### 1234. Parish Council Policy Documents

**a. Adopt new Financial Regulations**

To be deferred to the July Parish Council meeting.

**b. Adopt Data Retention Policy**

To be deferred to the July Parish Council meeting.

**c. Review Risk Management Policy**

To be deferred to the July Parish Council meeting.

#### 1235. A120/M11 roadworks

The date for final commission of the traffic lights is awaited. It is now hoped to be mid-June.

#### 1236. Finance

**a. Account Balances (already circulated).**

**Noted**

**b. Invoices and payments for approval.**

**Approved**

#### 1. Account Balances b/f 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Unity Trust Bank	<b>28584.04</b>
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#### 2. Payments due for May 2024

Npower	DD	191.67 (electricity for April 2024)
A&J Lighting	SO	45.90 (lighting maintenance)
Payroo	Online	6.00 (payroll expenses April 2024)
Gallagher	Already paid	2004.19 (insurance renewal)
Strutt and Parker	Already paid	45.00 (balance of Glebeland rent)
Keith Williams	Online	518.23 (salary for May 2024)
HMRC (Keith Williams)	Online	129.60 (PAYE for May 2024)
Keith Williams	Online	20.00 (office rent for May 2024)
McAfee (Keith Williams)	Online	39.99 (virus protection)
TBS Hygiene	Online	178.20 (dog bin emptying)
Castle Water	Already paid	82.60 (water rates)

<u>Total payments for May 2024</u>	<u>3261.38</u>
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<b>Allotment rent</b>	<b>0.00</b>
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<b>VAT refund</b>	<b>337.95</b>
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<b>Refund from EALC of duplicate payment</b>	<b>287.23</b>
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<b>Account Balance 30/04/2024</b>	<b>25947.84</b>
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Notes: The payments to HMRC and McAfee were made by the parish clerk and are being reimbursed.

**1237. Allotments/Recreation Ground**

**a. Recreation ground equipment**

The decision regarding new equipment will be deferred to the July Parish Council meeting.

**b. Allotments update**

- SISK have not yet installed the fencing.
- There has been some work on cutting back the oak trees but it is not yet completed.
- The tree ties need to be removed from the silver birch trees.
- Ace of Spades to be asked to clear the vacant lots.

**1238. Reports from County and District Councillors**

**None.**

**1239. Closure of meeting**

There being no further matters to discuss the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.32 .

**[2024/290]**