

**Draft Minutes of Birchanger Parish Council meeting**  
**held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30 pm.**  
**In Birchanger Village Hall**

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

0 members of the public  
Keith Williams (KW) – Parish Clerk  
Cllr Ray Gooding (RG)

**1174. Chairman’s Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

**1175. Apologies for Absence**

None

**1176. Declarations of Interest**

GD as District Councillor for another ward.

**1177. Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.**

None

**1178. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 had been previously circulated. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

**1179. Planning**

There were no planning applications to consider.

**1180. Traveller’s encampment update**

The traveller’s appeal was successful. The inspector Mr. M. Brooker concluded that the appeal should be allowed. [The full decision can be viewed at the Planning Inspectorate using the following reference; Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/23/3324961].

The Chair of Birchanger Parish Council has written to Mr Peter Holt, Chief Executive of UDC to express the views of the council. The letter is as follows;

“Mr P Holt  
Chief Executive  
Uttlesford District Council

February 1, 2014

Dear Peter

### **Travellers site, Birchanger Lane**

Birchanger Parish Council have been opposed to the occupation of the Green Belt since the arrival of the travellers in July 2018 and are extremely disappointed at the Inspector's decision.

Even taking into account the new evidence of noise pollution, plus the poor condition of the site and the impact on the Green Belt, the Inspector decided to allow the travellers appeal as there were no alternative pitches. This, plus the needs of the occupants, particularly in relation to the best interests of the children (Article 8 ECHR), overruled any other considerations.

The Inspector gave considerable weight to the lack of alternative sites. Paragraph 31 states *Furthermore, the Council have not presented at the hearing any notable progress since the last appeal on this site with regards to the new Local Plan, annual monitoring report or in the provision of other Gypsy Traveller sites.* This situation needs to be remedied as a matter of urgency. We remind you that when the site was purchased and an application was made and approved for stables to be erected on this site, no one had any idea of what would ensue. Given the very small percentage of Green Belt in Uttlesford, this type of situation must not be allowed to happen again.

Birchanger Parish Council require an absolute guarantee that the conditions in the Decision Letter will be regularly monitored and are complied with within the specified time, failing which UDC will take immediate enforcement action in line with the Inspectors conditions, including condition 11 i....*show how the internal space of the static caravans are/will be protected from external noise in accordance with BS8233:2014 and the current Noise Statement for England and iv b all mobile homes permitted under this permission should meet or exceed the sound insulation and ventilation standards set down in BS3632:2015.* Also, that the occupants will continue to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that no other travellers live in the site other than those listed in the Decision Letter.

Yours sincerely  
Angie Driscoll  
Chair, Birchanger Parish Council”

The response from Peter Holt is as follows:

Cllr Angie Driscoll Chair Birchanger Parish Council a.driscoll@birchangerpc.org.uk Dear Angie Re: Appeal allowed at Birchanger Travellers' Site Thank you for your letter of 1 February concerning the above. 6 February 2024 Our ref: PH/sk Please ask for Peter Holt on 01799 510400 email: pholt@uttlesford.gov.uk The outcome was disappointing but not entirely unexpected. The Inspector's decision is along the same lines as the previous Inspector's decision and effectively gives the occupiers more time to comply with various conditions as imposed previously. The council did not have an up-to-date assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the district (an assessment known as a GTAA) going into the appeal. We commissioned a new GTAA some time ago in conjunction with a number of district councils through Essex County Council. Unfortunately, this was delayed, in-part due to the capacity and availability of consultants to carry out the work, and in-part due to the availability of members of the G&T community to be interviewed as part of the evidence gathering. We now have sufficient data and plan to publish a new GTAA along with our Regulation 19 Local Plan this summer.

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As you know, the GTAA will set out how much G&T accommodation is needed in Uttlesford. It is then for us to identify sites to meet that need. The informal feedback from other districts who have recently had their GTAA work completed have seen their need increase. Thus, the GTAA itself will likely not safeguard against planning appeals. Having an adopted local plan with G&T allocations will assist. As stated, we plan to publish the Regulation 19 plan this summer. Perhaps understandably, the Inspector gave weight to the schooling of children living on the site and Human Rights considerations. However, the Inspector considered the conditions imposed (and the work required therein) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It does not therefore follow that compliance with the conditions should be ignored. Quite the opposite. Should the conditions not be complied with, as with any planning condition, the council will consider enforcement action Uttlesford council is committed to ensuring the proper planning of the district, and protection of our green belt. The draft local plan seeks to direct all new development to non-green belt land and the planning enforcement team will carefully consider any future breaches of planning control. Both the Local Plan Team and Planning Enforcement Team are resourced and supported to achieve our aims going forward. Thank you for Birchanger Parish Council's input into the planning appeal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely  
Peter Holt

#### **1181. A120/M11 roadworks**

For more information about the scheme please visit: <https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/highway-schemes/uttlesford-schemes/m11-junction-8-improvement-scheme>

#### **1182. Highways**

1. AD had enquired regarding the possible closure of Tot Lane or restriction to one-way traffic. Highways will not close the lane but may consider making it "No Entry" from the Forest Hall Lane end.
2. Details are awaited regarding the re-opening of Pines Hill.

The Speedwatch team have carried out three sessions in Birchanger Lane.

During two of the sessions a vehicle count was taken. Details as follows;

Monday	16.1.24	460
Friday	19.1.24	428

A separate survey was undertaken of cars heading towards the A120 between 8-9am.

Friday	12.1.24	301
Friday	19.1.24	300

Compared to survey during the same hour of 105 vehicles undertaken prior to roadworks.

#### **1183. Finance**

- a. **Account Balances (already circulated).**  
**Noted**
- b. **Invoices and payments for approval.**  
**Approved**

**BIRCHANGER PARISH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND PAYMENTS SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2023**

**1. Account Balances b/f 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Unity Trust Bank **23917.16**

**2. Payments due for December 2023**

TBS Hygiene	Already paid	142.56 (dog bins for November 2023)
Castle Water	Already paid	118.15 (water rates Oct23-Mar24)
Npower	DD	218.43 (electricity for November 2023)
Touchpoint	Already paid	250.00 (donation)
Payroo	Already paid	6.00 (payroll expenses for November 2023)
TBS Hygiene	Already paid	178.20 (dog bins for December 2023)
Keith Williams	Already paid	795.67 (salary plus backpay December 2023)
HMRC (Keith Williams)	Already paid	198.80 (PAYE for December 2023)
Keith Williams	Already paid	20.00 (office rent for December 2023)
A&J Lighting	SO	45.90 (lighting)
Unity Trust Bank	DD	18.00 (service charge)

Total payments for December 2023 1991.71

**Allotment rent** **0.00**

**Account Balance 31/12/2023** **21925.45**

Notes: The payment to HMRC was made by the parish clerk and is being reimbursed.

**BIRCHANGER PARISH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND PAYMENTS SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY 2024**

**1. Account Balances b/f 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

Unity Trust Bank **21925.45**

**2. Payments due for January 2024**

Npower	DD	227.07 (electricity for December 2023)
Payroo	Online	6.00 (payroll expenses for December 2023)
Keith Williams	Online	518.23 (salary for January2024)
HMRC (Keith Williams)	Online	129.60 (PAYE for January 2024)
Keith Williams	Online	20.00 (office rent for January 2024)
A&J Lighting	SO	45.90 (lighting maintenance)
TBS Hygiene	Online	142.56 (dog bin emptying Jan 2024)
Ken Wheatley	Online	62.95 (Zen hosting Mar-July 2023)

Total payments for January 2024 1152.31

**Allotment rent** **140.00**

**Account Balance 31/01/2024** **20913.14**

Notes: The payment to HMRC was made by the parish clerk and is being reimbursed.

## **1184. Allotments/Recreation Ground**

### **Allotments**

The original footpath 13 traversed through the middle of the allotments. For some time a path to the left of the allotments has been used as a “permissive path”. SISK had wanted to know the official status of footpath 13 but it was agreed that any renovation work would be carried out to the “permissive path” and not to footpath 13.

SISK have declined to trim/remove the 3 trees which overlook some allotments sites. GD has arranged for contractors to provide a quotation for this work. SISK have agreed to carry out some of the requests from the Parish Council.

### **Recreation Ground**

- Repairs to the basketball area have been completed.
- GT said the tables were in poor condition. He will arrange for them to be removed.
- GT will contact HAGS to arrange for inspection of the zipwire.

## **1185. Reports from County and District Councillors**

### **County Councillor Ray Gooding**

Regarding the Birchanger Lane “rat run”, it appears that Google has been re-directing motorists down Birchanger Lane when the A120 is congested. RG has asked Highways to contact Google to remove this advice.

He met with Affinity. They will increase the number of hours that their workmen work on the site but it will not be 24/7. They hope to finish within the next 7 days.

RG will contact Highways regarding remedial work to footpath 15.

As noted under **1181.1** above, Highways will not close the lane but may consider making it “No Entry” from the Forest Hall Lane end.

GD wondered if there could be a 7.5 ton weight limit on vehicles using the Lane. He noted that some of the trucks which have been transporting spoil in the area have been seen on the Lane.

## **1186. Closure of meeting**

There being no further matters to discuss the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.25.

**[2023/277]**