

## Harvey Howlett

**From:** Norfolk Herbs <info@norfolkherbs.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 03 February 2013 20:17  
**To:** Anne Griffiths  
**Subject:** St Peter's Church, Birch: Diocese of Chelmsford: Your ref:RC08/40CL

**Importance:** High

**VF-ITEM-ID:** 2456332:18525399:1675:

### Good Evening

I am sending this email at the eleventh hour because I have only just been made aware of the plans to demolish this church and the efforts that have been made over many years to find a solution to the future of this redundant church.

Although I have lived in Norfolk for nearly thirty years, I still have considerable ties to Birch Church. My grandparents are buried in the Churchyard and my Mother was born in the house at the Church gates. I have many beautiful childhood memories of this idyllic place- village, churchyard, meadow- and all held together both visually and spiritually by the Church itself and the focal point of its wonderful spire. My Mother used to love to take me to tend to her parent's grave, to pick snowdrops by the stream, to hear the first cuckoo or to picnic in the meadow beyond the Churchyard. My Father and Grandfather were both talented artists and I have several of their watercolours of Birch Church adorning the walls of my house. I visited the Church in 2011 following the death of my Mother. We wished, as a family, to lay a flower from her funeral wreath on her parent's grave. I have to admit it was a considerable shock to see the condition of the Church fabric ( and also to see that our beloved meadow was now an oak wood!). Norfolk communities work hard to preserve their historic Churches and I find it very hard to comprehend the Essex apathy. However, I am heartily relieved to read that the many ghastly proposals to save the fabric have not come to fruition. A conversion to flats or any domestic building would have been totally inappropriate. May I therefore suggest that demolition should, perhaps, go ahead as planned with the creation of a quiet area within the old walls. But please hear my plea for the retention of the spire. This could be done, I am sure and renovation costs would be a fraction of the estimates provided for repairing the whole Church. A listed building requires protection and this action would go a long way towards preserving a much loved landmark and place of worship.

Kind Regards

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