

**Colchester Borough Council**

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Mr J. Tipping  
Pastoral and Closed Churches  
Department  
Church Commissioners  
Church House  
London SW1P 3AZ

Date 6.12.13

Dear Mr Tipping

**Closed Church of St Peter's, Birch**

I was very pleased to hear that a purchaser has come forward with the knowledge, skills and resources to take on Birch Church. We have waited in anticipation for such a long time only to have our hopes dashed on several occasions.

I have a special interest in St Peter's as I was married there in 1984. My wife, Cllr Julie Young worshipped at Birch for many years and sung in the choir. She also has several relatives buried in the churchyard.

However, as Portfolio Holder for Planning at Colchester BC I also take a strategic view on this matter. The Council regards its built heritage as a vital, cultural asset and my colleagues and I do what we can to encourage, regulate and occasionally, enforce the proper preservation of these links to our past. They are after all, a finite resource and our activity in this area of work receives popular support from the majority of people in the Borough.

I do hope that the Church Commissioners hold a similar opinion and do what they can to encourage a scheme of conservation at Birch. For my part, I will instruct officers to continue to cooperate with the Colchester and North East Essex Building Preservation Trust and the prospective purchasers, Mr and Mrs Cottee in order to guide this project to a successful and positive conclusion.

Yours sincerely



Tim Young  
Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture  
Leader of the Labour Group