



ISSUE 11

JANUARY 2022

FREDERICKS WOOD

**AN ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME?
45 ACRE WOOD ON THE EDGE OF COLNEY
HEATH TRASHED WITH 40,000 – 50,000 TONNES
OF RUBBLE AND SOIL**

BOWMANS CROSS

**HERTSMERE COUNCIL LEADER
DECLARES THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN
MUST BE SHELVED AFTER RECEIVING
OVER 20,000 OBJECTIONS**



Fredericks Wood, photo credit Brett Ellis (posted on Facebook Campaign for Colney)

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

**THE SCOUTS SAGA
CONTINUES**

**COMMUNITY
GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

**MORE HOUSES PLANNED
IN COLNEY HEATH**

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or if you spot any errors or have comments

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The Theatre Club had an outing in November and has booked Pretty Woman for April, and the WI has met in Colney Heath Village Hall. Masks are no longer mandatory although recommended in crowded places. Life is returning like an early Spring – are we learning to live with Covid?.

In this New Year edition we feature four main issues of interest and concern to local residents :

- housing (and other) developments on the fields around us, all planning issues in the Green Belt
- the Community Governance Review by St Albans District Council.
- The Fredericks Wood fiasco
- the continuing Scouts saga.

Destruction of the Green Belt (see page 4)

Speaking with a resident who takes a close interest in threats to our environment, and is very active in contacting the authorities, she said “it feels like we are under siege” – permission granted for 100 houses on Bullens Green, maybe 45 next to the Football Club, maybe 150 between the Cock and Fairview&The Rickyard along Roestock Lane, the Affinity Waterworks, etc. Colney Heath village cant absorb any more houses – without unhappy consequences.

The Community Governance Review (see page 7)

The Review will consider whether the boundaries of the existing councils need to be changed. We think the Colney Heath Parish boundary should be altered to match the revised boundary of the District ward which will cover the rural area of the Parish from May 2022. The initial consultation is until the end of March this year. Residents opinions are being sought.

Fredericks Wood (page 12)

The import of maybe 40,000 to 50,000 tonnes of rubble and soil – when 5,000 tonnes may have been allowed – an environmental crime?

Bowmans Cross – wrong location

More than 20,000 objections were made to Hertsmeire’s draft Local Plan. On 26th January the Council chair said “Government housing targets expected more than 12,000 new homes during the life of any new plan. Over 9,000 of these were to be built on green belt land. Whilst residents and councillors understand the need for new homes, this potential decimation of large swathes of green belt has been too much for local people and local councillors to accept. I think it unlikely we will have a new local plan in place before 2024”.

But a plan they must have.

The Scouts saga (see page 10)

The Good Councillors Guide says “In a landscape where district and counties are devolving more local services, parish councils have more potential to work imaginatively in partnership with other bodies e.g. local businesses, the community and voluntary sector and local residents”.

What might (or should) have happened when the Scouts’ lease was due to expire on the land where they had built their hut, with their own funds,? The Colney Heath Parish Council could have asked them to make the necessary and reasonable repairs (and even offered a grant to assist) as part of an agreement to a new lease on the land – i.e. to work imaginatively with volunteers who have provided Scouting for many young people for nearly 50 years.

Instead the past 5 years have seen wrangling over Section 25 and 26 notices, disputes over repairs needed, numerous letters and legal costs incurred without result. The Parish Council have “acquired” the hut, and insured it for £558,000. This is the cost to replace if it burnt down, but it has been noted the building is an “uninsurable liability”. No one can work out exactly why this has happened.

Having “acquired” the hut the Parish Council the conundrum is the hut has to meet the higher standard for a public building. A business case needs to answer the following questions : would refurbishment or replacement with a new community building be viable? would it be a white elephant? would it drain the annual budget?.

The Council propose to survey the residents to seek their views on what to do. The draft survey was included in the agenda for the Council’s meeting in December.

Q15 Which of the following options, if any, would you most like to see happen to the building in Roestock Park, formerly the Scout & Guide Centre?

- ☐ Demolished and redeveloped into a community facility
 - ☐ Restored and leased to community groups
 - ☐ Any other options?
 - ☐ Other
 - ☐ Don't know
- Other, Please specify

So, now option for the Scouts to have their hut back.

Without seeing the business case for redevelopment or restoration these options are only a wish without knowing the consequences.

BTW, the answer is “Other” (but would require deep seated positions to shift).

Here we go again! Since planning permission was granted for 100 houses on Bullens Green Lane in June 2021, it did not take long for the next housing development to be proposed in the Colney Heath village. This time it is 45 houses on farmland next to the Football Club. Tarmac issued a "consultation" in November 2021 showing the development they intend to submit for planning approval.

There is a shortage of housing and the price of property is far beyond the reach of many people, in particular first-time buyers and key workers. As at Bullens Green Lane, Tarmac are proposing about half the development will be "affordable" housing. They will probably be encouraged by the infamous "Colney Heath Precedent" which is now being cited by developers in many planning applications. In the Planning Inquiry for the Bullens Green Lane appeal, the shortage of housing lack of an approved Local Plan to solve the problem, trumped the harm of developing on greenfield farmland in the Green Belt. And we should expect Roundhouse Farm to soon apply for planning permission for 150 houses on the farmland along Roestock Lane between the old Cock Pub and Fairview/the Rickyard.

St Albans District Council are in the process of updating their Local Plan. They have "called for sites" to be considered with most of the fields around the village being offered by landowners and developers.

There are three main reasons why not to build more housing on the fields in Colney Heath and the surrounding areas.

- the Green Belt
- the local infrastructure
- the "market" versus the "system"

THE GREEN BELT

The whole of Colney Heath lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt. This was established in 1947 to provide a permanent open ring of fields, forests and parklands around London to prevent urban sprawl.

Sometimes it takes a foreign observer to explain the wisdom of our forefathers. Bill Bryson puts the matter eloquently. In the "Road to Little Dribbling" published in 2015 he compares Denver USA (pop 3 million), with London (pop 9 million).

...I come from the Land of Shocking Sprawl. From time to time these days I drive with my wife from Denver International Airport to Vail, high in the Colorado Rockies. It is a two hour drive, the first hour is just getting out of Denver. It is a permanent astonishment to me just how much support an American lifestyle needs - shopping malls, distribution centres, storage depots, gas stations, multiplex cinemas, gyms, teeth-whitening clinics, business parks, motels, propane storage facilities, car dealerships, and endless miles of suburban houses all straining for a view of distant mountains.

Travel out twenty five or thirty miles out from central London and you get to Great Windsor Park or Epping Forest or Box Hill. Travel twenty five or thirty miles out from Denver and you get just more Denver.

The arithmetic of the British countryside is simple and compelling. Britain has 60 million acres of land and about 60 million people - one acre each person. Everytime you give up ten acres of greenfield, in effect ten people lose their acre. By developing countryside you force more and more people to share less and less space.

Americans, who have no green belts and never had them, have for over a hundred years been moving further and further out from their own cities; the outer suburbs have the most expensive housing. What people on the outer edge are always looking for is the thing that England already has : countryside.

The Green belt keeps a lot of land off the market. Yes it does. That is actually the idea of it. But that land is not sitting there doing nothing. It shelters wildlife, transpires oxygen, sequesters carbon and pollutants, grows food, provides quiet lanes for cycling and footpaths for walking, adds grace and tranquility to the landscape.

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) annual State of brownfield report 2021 shows that there is enough suitable brownfield land available in England for more than 1 million homes across over 18,000 sites and over 26,000 hectares.

LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite its proximity to urban areas Colney Heath is a village, not a suburb of either the St Albans City or Hatfield.

Colney Heath may not appear on chocolate boxes but it has all the features of a village : a Church, a village hall, a primary school, a football and social club, a pub, a village shop and post office, an Indian takeaway, a hairdresser and, more recently, a café. The village is surrounded by farmland and woods with the Common in the centre. Local businesses include a Coal merchant and a Stoneworks. But, more important than these facilities and businesses, it has a strong community with deep historic roots. There are many community organizations including the WI, the Colney Heath Scouts, Beavers, Cubs, Guides and Brownies groups, the Colney Heath Boissy Twinning Association. The village has a number of interest groups and clubs for culture and sports.

According to data published by Herts County Council, the Colney Heath primary school is 50% oversubscribed. The situation for secondary school place is far worse. The nearest state secondary schools are massively oversubscribed. Beaumont had more than 1,200 applications for 210 places, and Samuel Rider Academy (formerly Francis Bacon) had over 800 applications for 120 places. Residents in Colney Heath fight for places. Some have even been offered places in Stevenage, 15 miles away.

For secondary schools - and everything else - villagers have to drive to work, to shop, to see a doctor or a dentist, to have a meal out in a restaurant. Despite having many bus stops, there are few bus services and none of practical use for most purposes for most people. Once on the road, residents face traffic congestion and dangerous conditions from quarrying and agricultural workings, and flooding even after small amounts of rain.

Building more houses on the fields around in the village -100 here, 45 over there, another 150 on another field, adds houses but nothing else - except more pressure on roads and flooding, and huge pressure on local facilities like schools. And development replaces farmland with concrete and tarmac, and destroys the very feature that makes Colney Heath attractive - open space for walking and horse riding, open space that keeps the village from becoming an "urban edge" of nowhere.

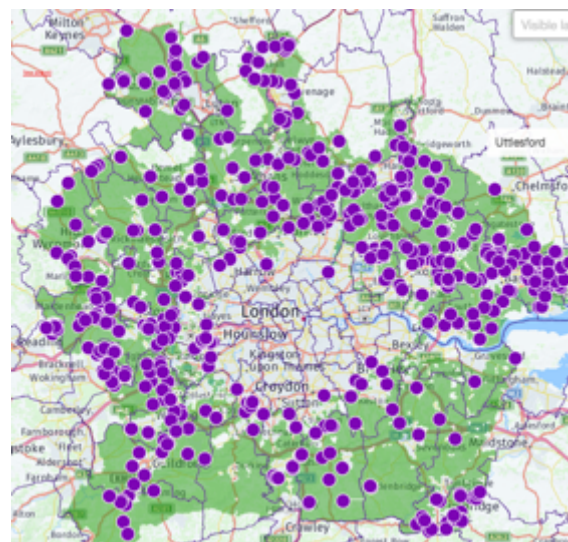
THE "MARKET" VERSUS "THE SYSTEM".

It was the argument that Zack Simons put forward that won the appeal for Bullens Green Lane

- that neither St Albans nor Welwyn Hatfield had a plan to meet the shortage in housing need, and there is no prospect of an approved Local Plan in the near future
- under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) development in the Green Belt is permitted under "very special circumstances" and the housing shortage is a "very special circumstance"
- providing housing outweighed the harm to the Green Belt by developing *"a pleasant if not particularly spectacular green field on the edge of a lovely Hertfordshire village"*.

Simons noted that the "Plan-led" system had failed and the developer-led "market" approach was providing the solution. This "solution" means housing shortage can be solved by building on almost any site regardless of its suitability or impact on the local community and the environment.

Land is finite so there can be no "free market". What the "developer led" solution means is eye-watering profits for landowners. The housebuilders, sandwiched between the land price and house sale price, then make their profits by building pokey houses with flimsy "value engineered" construction.



Threats to the Metropolitan Green Belt mapped by CPRE

THE "AFFORDABLE" MYSTERY

But 45% of the properties will be "affordable" which surely must be a good thing?

Lets assume a couple who are both two key workers, a nurse or police officer, with a combined full time income of 50,000 per year with a take home pay of £3,400 per month. The St Albans Review calculated the cost of living for a key worker in St Albans, excluding accommodation, is around £1,400 per month (£2,800 for a couple both working). This leaves £600 per month for rent or a mortgage.

"Affordable" means 80% of market price. A 2 bed property at 80% of market price would around £270,000 in Colney Heath). With a 5% deposit of £13,500 they might be get a mortgage between £137,000 and £180,000 – a shortfall between £76,000 and £120,000.

"Affordable" also means 80% of market rent. Little data is available for Colney Heath but in the local area 80% of market rent of some examples show a 2 bedroom dwelling would cost £1,080 per month.

The outlook for a single income family looks dire.

BTW -There used to be good solution – it was called Council Housing.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE LOCAL PLAN

So why have St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield not achieved an approved Local Plan? There are 2 main problems to overcome in reaching an approved Local Plan. The first is due to the structural flaw of the Localism Act 2011, the second is the Green Belt conundrum.

Central to the Inspector's review of a Local Plan is that is informed by agreements with other authorities, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground. Councils have a duty to co-operate.

The Guardian has noted *"The duty to co-operate is flawed, because local politics breeds different – sometimes conflicting – local visions for everything from employment to housing. Without a regional level of oversight to knock heads together, more councils could become locked into long disputes over housing and as a result, new homes will take longer to deliver"*

And we would add, this leaves an open goal for landowners and developers to develop unsuitable sites in unsustainable locations to the detriment of communities and the environment. St Albans' previous attempts to deliver a Local Plan were overruled as they failed to agree with neighbouring Councils. Hertsmere are facing a similar problem where St Albans have objected to Hertsmere's plan for Bowmans Cross on the St Albans District border.

The structural flaw is that Councils are forced into conflicting positions, fighting each other like ferrets tied up in a sack, biting each other.

And the Green Belt conundrum drives the ferrets into a crazed state where agreement is impossible and after a while they suffocate from lack of air and exhaustion.

For the St Albans planners, the Green Belt conundrum is that 82% of the land in St Albans District is designated Green Belt. Over the years development in St Albans District has exhausted the available strategies for growth– expansion on the edges, infilling, and increasing density.

There is no more undesignated land available. The only place left is to allocate land in the Green Belt for more development. But this is supposed to be kept permanently open. This is a nightmare for the Council's planners and a political nightmare for the politicians on the District Councils.

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

After WWII the bold move was to create new towns. The idea was to apply the garden town movement which created Letchworth (started in 1903) and Welwyn Garden City (founded in 1920). Lack of money post war meant Hertfordshire's new towns – Hatfield, Hemel, Harlow and Stevenage did not replicate the earlier achievements in environmental quality. The "garden village", not a new idea, is currently in vogue. East Herts District Plan has allocated the largest removal of the Green belt in the country with 7 garden villages in a cluster in the Glisten area north of Harlow totalling 10,000 dwellings. These vary in size from 700 dwelling to 2,000. IF the brownfield land is all developed, IF more housing is really needed in the Home Counties, and IF the location is right (all big IFs), maybe this approach is more rational than the small, fragmental, money grabbing "markey-led" approach.

St Albans City and District Council has started a public consultation with residents being asked to give their views on how local communities in the District are governed. This includes the Colney Heath Parish Council. Anyone with an interest should give their views in the consultation – see details at the end of this article.

WHY A REVIEW?

The District Council electoral arrangements were altered following a review by the Boundary Commission in 2020.

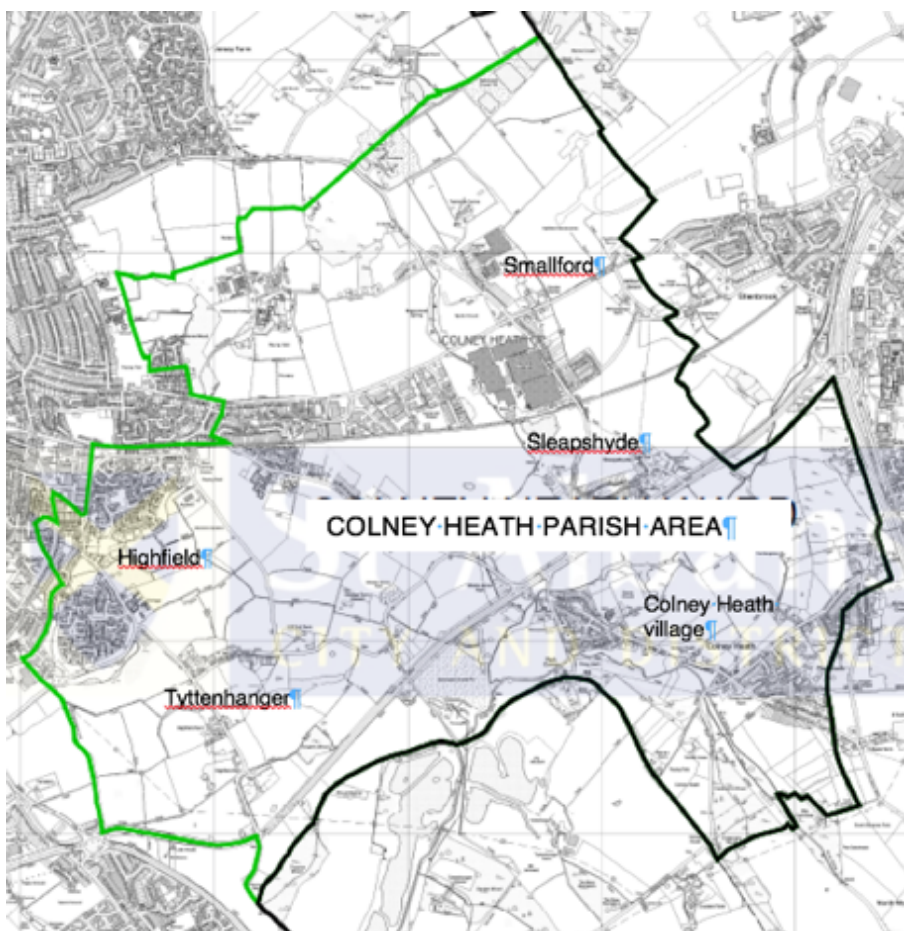
The aim of this review is to see if improvements are needed so the councils better reflect local identities and serve communities more effectively. The review will examine whether residents are represented in the best possible way. Parish councils have many important responsibilities and they can also influence decisions taken by other bodies.

Communities change over time and it is vital that parish councils continue to reflect trends and have a real identity.

Among the issues being considered are whether there is a need to alter the number of wards and councillors or create a new parish council. The review will also look at whether the boundaries of the existing councils need to be changed.

THE COLNEY HEATH PARISH

Until the late 1990s the area of Colney Heath Parish was a mainly rural area with people living in Tyttenhanger, Smallford, Sleepshyde and Colney Heath village, with an urban extension down the Hatfield Road. The development of the Highfield & Hill End area on the closed Hill End hospital site and along Hill End Lane means now about half of the residents live in the small “urban” area on the edge of St Albans– see map below



DISTRICT COUNCIL CHANGE

Colney Heath has been represented on St Albans District Council by 2 Councillors for the ward, Chris Brazier and Jamie Day.

In 2020 the Boundary Commission conducted a review with 3 main considerations

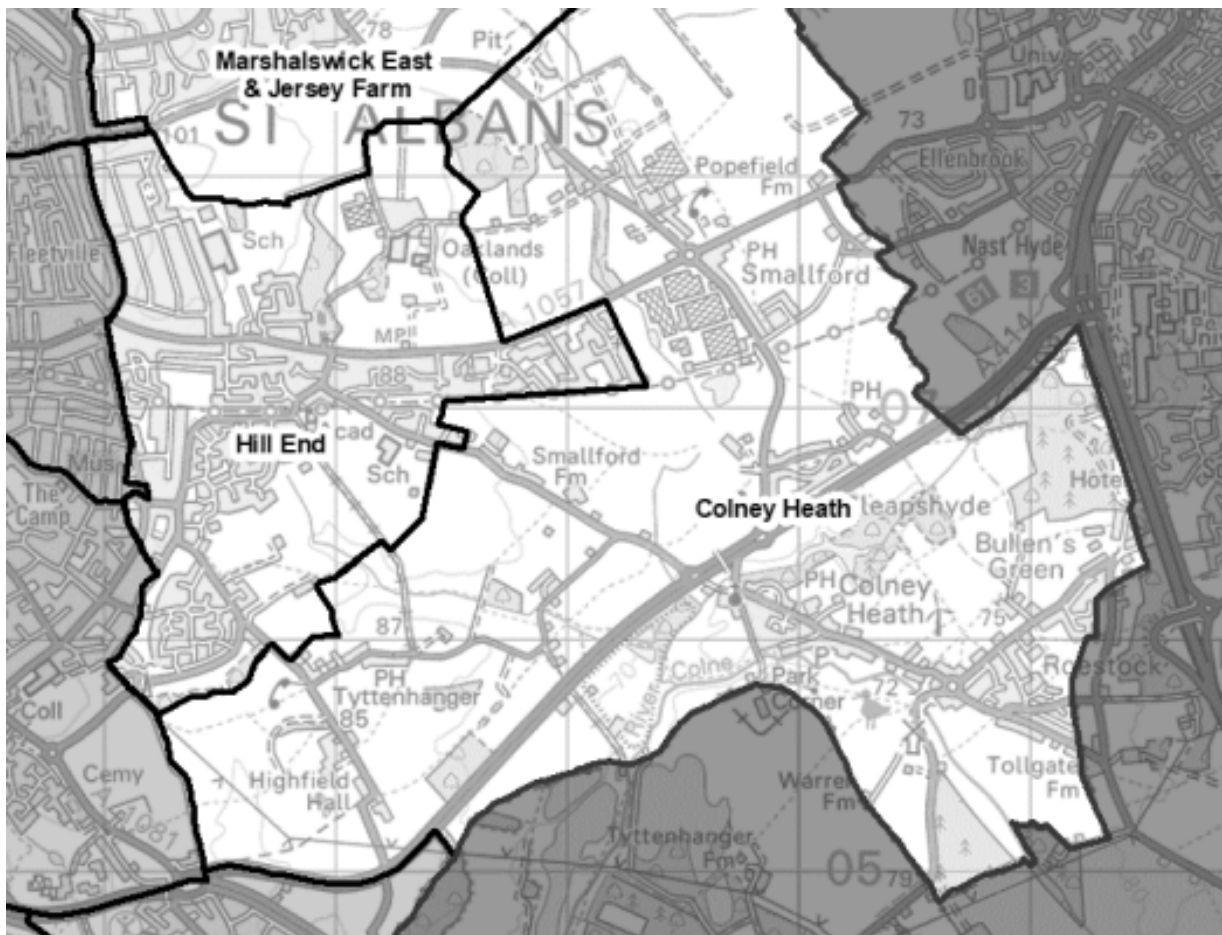
- equality of representation
- reflecting community interests and identities
- providing for effective and convenient local government

The Boundary Commission reported in June 2020 that “Representations from residents of Highfield and Tyttenhanger were received to the effect that these areas felt little affinity with Colney Heath within their existing (District) ward, and felt that their community was part of St Albans city”.

In their final report in Dec 2020 the Boundary Commission notes “Colney Heath Parish Council repeated their submission (that the Colney Heath area) could be best represented by a single-member ward, focused on the rural areas of Colney Heath parish.

The boundary of the District Council ward has been altered to cover the rural areas of Tyttenhanger, Smallford, Sleepshyde and Colney Heath (see map below).

This will take effect in the District Council elections in May this year with one District Councillor. One of the aims of the review is to consider bringing Parish Council boundaries into line with the new District Ward Boundaries.



YOUR EDITORS' POINT OF VIEW

We think the Colney Heath Parish boundary should be altered to match the boundary of the District ward, using the same reasoning applied to the District ward change.

The Parish Council would be responsible for the rural area only. Urban and rural residents generally have different interests which are difficult to balance. The urban residents tend to identify with St Albans City (some don't even know where Colney Heath is). Residents in the rural areas identify with their local area – hamlet or village.

A rural Parish Council may represent around 2,000* electors, about 44% of the current Parish Council. Harpenden rural Parish Council is reported to have 337 electors, St Michaels Parish Council 392, so this would not be the smallest Parish Council in the District. The rural Parish Council might have 5 Councillors, the minimum required for a Parish Council.

With tax income via the precept from about 1,100* households, a rural Parish Council would have a smaller budget and would need to be managed very efficiently to avoid an increase in the precept. This is likely to be challenging.

(*approximate data)

Another consideration will be the potential increase in the population with housing developments in the rural area. It may be wise to not ward the rural Parish to avoid unbalanced representation as the community develops and changes.

If the boundary is altered to form a rural Parish Council the elected Councillors should focus on the commonality of interests and concerns in the area :

- protection of the Green Belt and open spaces
- the lack of public transport and support for isolated elderly and vulnerable citizens,
- facilities and activities for children and young adults
- anti-social behavior and crime
- strong community organizations and clubs and volunteering for community benefit
- the role of village halls
- the importance of village pubs

The parish was called St. Peter Rural until 1947. Might the parish should be again renamed to provide a common identity to the rural settlements in the area
St Albans Rural perhaps?

REVIEW TIMETABLE

The initial consultation will run until Thursday 31 March 2022.

A further period of consultation on any proposed changes will take place between Friday 1 July and Friday 16 September 2022.

Final recommendations will be made to St Albans District Full Council in December with any changes taking effect at the May 2023 parish elections.

HOW TO RESPOND

You can give your views online at elections@stalbans.gov.uk or by post to

Electoral Services (CGR),
St Albans City and District Council,
Civic Centre,
St Peter's Street,
St Albans, AL1 3JE.

Let us know what you think.

e-mail Mike at michaelredfern2006@gmail.com

Summary of the Scout Group letter sent to the Parish Council on 5th December 2021

Full details of the letter can be found on the SOS website: <https://bit.ly/33GaIGr>

For almost 5 years now the Scouts in Colney Heath have been trying to renew the lease on the Scout HQ in Roestock Park, Colney Heath.

For nearly 50 years the Group has been offering Scouting to local young people and thousands of young people (and adults) have benefitted from the important work of the Group across the Parish. For the last forty plus years the Group had a purpose-built Scout HQ in Roestock Park which the Group paid for and built in the late 1970's, and we have always leased the land from the Parish Council for a peppercorn rent.

Lease renewal

The lease renewal was first mentioned in the July 2016 Parish Council meeting:

'Lease renewal on Scout Hut due September 2017'

In December 2016 at a Parish Council meeting the Scout Group were told that it was:
'just a case of renegotiating the terms' on the current lease.

A year later the Scout Group were told that the issue of the lease was being put 'on hold'. In May 2018 the Parish Council (unknown to the Scout Group) added the Scout HQ to their asset register with a value of £558,000!

Also, in May 2018 the Parish Council respond to the Scout Group with the Heads of Terms that were mentioned at a joint meeting in April 2018, it had two offers and the options were either £15,000 per annum for sole use and paying for all the maintenance and utility costs or Rent hourly booking for £12.50 per hour.

Section 26 Notice

A Section 26 notice is a request by the tenant for a new lease. In December 2018 the Scout Group issued a Section 26 notice. In February 2019 the Parish Council rejected our Section 26 notice and issued a Section 25 counter-notice stating the Scout HQ had fallen into disrepair (something the Scout Group disputes). At no time have the Scout Group been issued with a schedule of dilapidations.

After seeking legal advice, it was our understanding at that time that if we wanted to dispute the Parish Councils decision, we would need to issue court proceedings to challenge the Parish Council section 25 notice. At that time the Scout Group did not have the funds to fight the Parish Council in lengthy and expensive court proceedings.

A New Offer

In letter dated 30th July 2019 the Scout Group make a formal offer to the Parish Council offering to take on a lease for 20 years at an annual rent of £125.

In September 2019 the Parish Council rejected the offer made by the Scout Group and offered a sessional arrangement for a 2 year period at a weekly term time rent of £25. The rental offer came with restricted use of the Scout HQ to only the nights we use it, a Beaver sleepover and yearly hanging up and drying of tents. The Scout Group rejected the short term offer as we wanted to secure a long term lease along similar lines to that we have enjoyed for over 40 years.

Locked Out of Scout HQ

In December 2019 the Scout Group were locked out of the Scout HQ they paid for and built.

Dispute

The basis of the dispute centres around the condition of the Scout HQ, the Parish Council arguing it has fallen into disrepair and stating over £100k needs to be spent on the Scout HQ in order to make it safe and compliant. The Scout Group have continually disputed this figure and subsequent professional advice has confirmed this.

The £100k figure comes from the July 2020 survey (year 1 £97,750) but it's a really disingenuous figure to use as it includes a significant number of items which are not required for any safety and compliance including, an amount in there to repair the car park outside of the Scout HQ boundary and a regular window cleaner!! It also includes £15k to demolish and rebuild the garage, £10k to replace windows, £3k to cut the grass, £4k to paint the walls, £1k to redecorate the front gate, £1.5k to replace the front door mat!!

The professional survey undertaken by the Parish Council in July 2020 stated that:

'with the exception of a small number of items, the majority of the recommendations herein comprise maintenance works of a non-urgent nature and could be deferred to subsequent years, subject to current and future budgetary constraints and any special requirements.'

The Scout Group have accepted that some repairs and modernisation are required and we have always said that we are prepared to make (and fund) any necessary repairs in order to ensure the Scout HQ remains compliant and safe.

Funds and Works and Offers

The Scout Group has reached its fundraising target of £30k and we now have the money to cover all the works from the quotes we received. We are extremely grateful to the very kind generosity of all our supporters.

Heads of Terms

In February 2021 the Parish Council issued a draft Heads of Terms for a proposed 20 year lease. The Scout Group were strongly advised by the Parish Council to take legal advice on the draft heads of terms. The Scout Group did this in good faith and spent a significant amount of time and money preparing a full response. This cost the Scout Group £900, money that has been donated by residents of the Parish.

On 7th March 2021 the Scout Group provided a full response to the draft heads of terms and we were looking forward to the next stages of the negotiations.

In May 2021 the Scout Group were informed by the Parish Council that they were investigating the potential to demolish the Scout HQ to replace it with a new 'community hub' building which would house the Parish Council Office as well as a commercial sports facility.

The Parish Council have once again changed the goalposts and are no longer pursuing the February 2021 heads of terms but the Scout Group have had no detailed response as to why this has been taken off the table.

Questions for the Parish Council

The level of work required on the Scout HQ has been the biggest sticking point over the last 2 years and there is an urgent need to agree what is 'actually' required from a legal and compliance perspective.

FREDERICKS WOOD.

A 45 acre wood with many trees, blue bells on the wood floor and kites above, one the edge of Colney Heath village, in the Green Belt.

Mayhem breaks out in November.

Huge mounds of earth and rubble have been trucked onto the site, placed in bunds and spread onto the site. Trees have been cut down, and the ground churned up.

The mess, disruption and danger on Coursers Road, starting in late November and continuing into January, has not escaped the notice of many residents. Police and the ambulance services have attended. The road had to be closed at one point.

What happened?

Apparently the company that has purchased Fredericks Wood could import up to 5 tonnes of material to build a bund. It seems much more than this amount was brought onto the site, and quite a lot ended up on Coursers Road. A worker was out on Coursers Road with a broom vainly trying to clear away the muck. This was very dangerous for both him and the public driving by.

Colney Heath Parish Council, working with our County Councillor John Hale, have been very active in raising the issues with the authorities – the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency, the Police, Herts Highways etc. Our District Councillor Chris Brazier was in contact with the Environment Agency on the problems. Daisy Cooper also got involved. A number of residents also reported the incidents to the authorities.

The Parish Council Clerk received a number of e-mails from local residents and has noted the matter was very alive on social media.

The Clerk tried to deal with the site manager but was abused and threatened. The Parish Council has been keeping records of lorry movements to estimate the quantity of material delivered to the site.

A narrow strip of land along the Fredericks Wood side of Coursers Road belongs to the Parish being part of the Common and the Warren.



Photo credit Brett Ellis

The Parish Council and the previous owner had an agreement allowing vehicles to cross over Parish land into the wood. It seems this agreement has been breached many times. The Parish Council agreed to a budget for legal advice and action on the matter. Residents have noted the mud in the Colne River and some have assumed this has come from the mayhem at Fredericks Wood. This may partly be true but John Hale noted that there is mud in the river upstream of Fredericks Wood.

It was noted at the Parish Council meeting on 13 January that a “cease and desist” order had just been issued by the Environment Agency. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation and requested the public to take the details and report if any works or lorry movements are observed.

This victory, although maybe shortlived, is testament to the serious and urgent actions by the Parish Council working with superior authorities and the local community.

So what happens next?

Several weeks after the work started, the owner submitted an application to St Albans District Council Planning on 14th December for a “certificate of lawfulness” for the bunds for “health and safety reasons”. The application does not further define why bunds are required, but it is understood that the owner intends to run an activity centre for shooting and quad biking and the bunds would reduce noise.

Objections have been submitted by a number of parties. A resident noted that the application shows about 1,200 metres of bund but has calculated 5,000 tonnes would only build a bund length of 530 metres. The Colney Heath Parish Council submitted a strong and comprehensive objection which can be summarised as follows:

Material delivered

A traffic sample and the evidence obtained from residents indicates the volumes are far in excess of the volumes required in build the size of bunds applied for in the certificate of lawfulness. An initial estimate based on conservative assumptions that approximately 200 HGV loads were delivered per day (approx 10,000 thousand tonnes per week) to the site in the three weeks prior to Christmas and in the first week of 2022, a total in the order of 40,000 tonnes. In addition, loads were delivered in November the total is likely to be in the order of 50,000 tonnes.

Flood risk

The dumped soil and bunds are close to the river Colne and is within the rivers flood plain area. Any restriction of the flood plain could have significant impacts on existing properties in the area due to the reduction of size of flood plain in Fredericks Wood area, so increasing the water volumes flooding Colney Heath Common.

Environmental Harm

Damage to trees in Frederick's wood both physical machine damage and longer-term root damage see below.

Habitat loss

CPHC can find no evidence the any environmental assessment has been completed. From reports supplied by residents the site had badgers set close by and other wildlife on site or in close proximity.

Pollution of River Colne

On several days the amount of mud carried in the river Colne caused concern either from runoff or by depositing soil in the river. The volumes of were such that the Environment Agency was contacted due to the concerns about the possible damage to the river Colne and flora and fauna.

Editor's comment

The wood is, we understand, designated as a "LCA2 Landscape Conservation Area" where special development control considerations apply in addition to general Green Belt restraint policy.

Works, recklessly carried out causing disruption and danger to our community, that have damaged the land, the trees, the vegetation and wildlife on the site, to be further damaged an activity centre. If Planning Consent is granted this will be travesty.

NALC FOUNDATION AWARD

The Parish Council's submission for the award can be found in the responses to Freedom of Information requests on their website.

The criteria are the basic requirements which the Council can show they have met. Having a website, responding to Freedom of Information requests, newsletters, twitter feed and Facebook is shown as evidence of "consulting the community"!

It was, we think, Cllr Shaw who proposed the Council consult the community about what to do with "our assets", Gloucester Park, Horseshoe Field, the Scout hut etc. The Council has engaged Enventure Research, to do a public consultation survey.

Given their approach to dealing with some individuals and community organizations, the Council should not be surprised that some residents do not view it as an "award winning institution", however low the bar is set by NALC.

Would the Council be brave enough to include a question in the public consultation survey "how would you rate the performance of the Parish Council?"

The Council has done well in dealing with the Fredericks Wood fiasco but would this be enough to alter opinions?

Apparently the Parish Council are thinking about charging Treasure Tots and Tae Kwon Do a fee for their banners which are displayed outside the Village Hall because these are on a strip land owned by the Parish Council. These banners have been displayed for many years. The delay in collecting fees has resulted in losses to the Parish coffers.



It is wonderful to start the year of 2022 with new hope and excitement about what is to come. I have always enjoyed new beginnings and love hearing the news of a birth or the start of a new job. These moments are celebratory and hope-filled with an excitement about what a fresh start might bring. Perhaps this year you long for a fresh start and may want to take a moment to pause and think about what new beginnings mean for you. For many new beginnings are a time to reset and refocus their lives on what matters. The Christian faith speaks of a new life found in faith in God and you may be in a position where you would like to explore this further. If yes, then please receive the invitation to come along to informal, relaxed Discovery groups which are safe spaces to explore issues of life and faith.

I am pleased to share with you that we have appointed Shannon Horner as full time Youth Worker who will be working with young people both within the church and community, do say hello to her when you see her.

This new year, a number of activities have returned to the church diary and please take a look at St Mark's website to find out more. I would like to particularly highlight the **Community Café** taking place every **1st Thursday of the month** from 10 – noon, all ages welcome!

May you have a blessed and special 2022.

Caroline

Revd Caroline Keightley. Vicar, St Mark's Church
Church Lane, Colney Heath, St Albans AL4 0NH

Sunday Services

8.30am Holy Communion

10.30 Morning Worship - live streamed

Our Children and Young Peoples' groups meet at the same time as the 10.30am service in the church centre.

Easter Services

14th April Maundy Thursday 7.30pm

15th April Good Friday 10.30am

17th April Easter Sunday 8.30am and 10.30am

You can view all our Digital Services through St. Mark's YouTube channel or visit our website.

www.stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk

The Clergy are available for baptisms, wedding and funerals.

Please contact the office for more information

Office: 01727 825175. email: office@stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk

Rabbits – time to protect or kill?

I listened in to the Parish Council Environment Committee ('Zoom') meeting on 8 December 2021 with a particular interest in learning how discussions were progressing between the Council and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust about provision of technical support for managing Colney Heath Common Local Nature Reserve. The Common is one of the most important wildlife sites in the St Albans district but unfortunately is coming under more pressure than ever because of recent adjacent developments, an increase in visitors (and pets) as well as threatened future development (including Bowmans Cross).

It was encouraging to learn during the meeting of plans to resource the establishment of a 'Friends' group to undertake conservation tasks and for advice to be offered on reviewing the current management plan. I expect that this updating will need to be consistent with the government's newly announced schemes for 'Landscape recovery and Local nature recovery' that will replace the Environmental Stewardship scheme that currently provides a contribution from central government towards the costs of managing our nature reserve.

Initial reports say that rare fauna such as water voles will be a target of the schemes; long standing residents may recall a once healthy population of water voles along the River Colne on the Common, but sadly these have been lost, presumably due to a combination of change in water flow and quality and predation by mink.

So what has this got to do with rabbits? Well, the subsequent agenda item was 'Update on rabbits on the Common' and the draft minutes now available on the CHPC website state; ***'Clerk advised that daily ferreting is currently taking place. As part of the ongoing management of the rabbit population a survey was proposed for March 2022.'***

This set me thinking about my attitude to wild rabbits and their part in the biodiversity of the Common. As a gardener and allotment keeper I find rabbits are a source of great annoyance when they gain access to my precious vegetables and flowers.

Some years ago, the rabbit population on Smallford Pits seemed to explode and their appearance in our garden resulted in my urgent erection of rabbit fencing to protect precious plants. However, in recent years the rabbit fencing has seemed redundant.



The Water Vole
once a resident of Colney Heath common



European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus Cuniculus*)

Do we need to manage the numbers of rabbits on the Common? Clearly, they are a long-established resident of the Common. Indeed, part of the Common near Warren Farm is known as 'The Warren' and the word itself is defined as 'a system of holes and underground tunnels where wild rabbits live'. I always enjoy seeing them graze and race for cover when walking across the Common. Less enjoyable has been accidentally putting my foot down a burrow entrance.

The rabbits must have a major impact on the grassland through this grazing and burrowing activity and they are an important food source for the buzzards and kites that grace our skies as well as for foxes. I suspect they have a major and overall beneficial impact on the Common as a nature reserve, but I do not have data or expert opinion to establish that is the case.

The UK has a long history of controlling rabbits as pests with plenty of advice from government and other groups about control that ranges from fencing to exclude to various means of capturing and killing.

However recent studies have found that '*Rabbit numbers decreased by 88% in the east Midlands and 83% in Scotland between 1996 and 2018. They fell 43% across the whole of the UK over the decade to 2018, with the latest scientific survey recording no sign of the declines slowing. (The Guardian 28 Nov 2021).*' The article goes on to say '*Rabbits are selective grazers, and keep vigorous grasses in check, thereby assisting more delicate wildflowers. The animal's earth-scratching and burrowing helps seeds germinate and creates what ecologists call "mini mosaic habitat" – patches of warm, bare earth which are havens for rare flowers and invertebrates, as well as the common lizards and adders that bask there.*'

I note the following extract from Colney Heath Nature Reserve Bylaws (2020) available on the CHPC website;

2. Within the Reserve the following acts are hereby prohibited except insofar as they may be authorised by a permit issued by the Council in accordance with Byelaw 5, or are necessary to the proper execution of his duty by an officer of the Council or by any person, or servant of any person, employed or authorised by the Council.

a) Damage to or disturbance of things in the Reserve

1. Spreading or using any net, or setting or using any lamp or other instrument, or any snare or lure, for the taking, injury or destruction of any living creature.
2. Taking, molesting or intentionally disturbing, injuring or killing any living creature.

I think careful consideration should be given to any rabbit management on the Common and an appropriate survey should be undertaken in advance of any possible control actions (not after!).

It would be a terrible shame if we (or our children) find it necessary to develop a plan to re-introduce the rabbit to the Common in years to come; back in the 1960s the idea of needing to re-introduce the water vole would have seemed equally unthinkable.



The Warren during August 2021



Colney Heath School and Nursery

Inspire, Encourage, Enable, Enthuse



Nursery Places 2022

Is your child born between 1st September 2018 and 31st August 2019?
We are offering 15 hours free Nursery provision

Email the school admin@colneyheath.herts.sch.uk
or call us on 01727 823898

Application forms are available on our Admissions Page of our website: www.colneyheath.herts.sch.uk

We join in whole school events such as Sports Day, Christmas performances and other celebrations.



We experience a full primary school setting, which will prepare the us for full time education



There is the opportunity for us to play and learn with other children of all ages.



2022 has started well

www.colneyhethvillagehall.com

The New Year sees the Village Hall busy with a number of bookings in the Main hall. We still have availability which we are looking to fill. The Studio (the Community Room rebranded) has some bookings but there are available sessions on most days.

New bookings include meditation sessions and dance practice. The booking calendar can be viewed on our website/enquire page. This is updated regularly but contact John on jackclemow@gmail.com or m: 07803 313 525 to check that the slot you would like is available.

We have been told by many hirers that our hire rates are very reasonable.

Our next improvement project

We continue to invest in improving the facilities at the hall. During half term in February we are upgrading the lighting in the Main hall and the Studio with LED dimmable main lighting and LED "party" LED uplighting.

In the Studio we are installing dimmable LED main lighting and sound absorption panels – the acoustics are a bit "lively" since we replaced the carpet with hardflooring. We have been awarded a grant from the Low Carbon Workplace for a third of the lighting upgrading cost.

CAN YOU HELP?

Anne Jarman retired as a trustee last year and Eddie Walsh will retire at the end of February.

[We are looking for people who wish to see the Village Hall continue successfully to join our management committee.](#)

We have 4 formal meetings each year with a quick catch up between, so the time commitment is limited. Please contact John for more information.

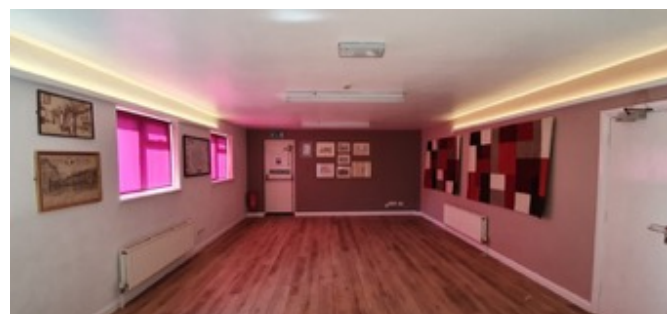


We have a new design for the Bill Franklin Memorial Garden to improve visibility of the hall. We hope to get the work done this year.



We have modernized our kitchen with a grant kindly awarded by Tarmac

Tarmac also awarded a grant for the upgrading of the Community Room which we now call the "Studio".



Quarry works appeal

The Planning Inquiry to determine whether permission would be allowed to quarry minerals on the Hatfield aerodrome site, sat on the 16th November 2021 and lasted nearly 2 weeks.

It considered the appeal by Brett Aggregates against Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) decision to refuse permission for the quarry. A huge amount of work to prepare for this enquiry was carried out by a small team from Ellenbrook Residents' Association (ERA), Smallford Residents' Association (SRA) and Colney Heath Parish Council (CHPC).

Brett Aggregates were keen to have the Inspector also decide on the second application they had very recently submitted to HCC (with few changes from the one that had been refused!). In the meantime, SRA worked hard to ensure that residents were aware of this second application and had an opportunity to voice their opinion to HCC, to ensure this application wasn't nodded through from lack of objections.

We now await the Inspectors opinion, which is expected shortly.

Community Governance Review

While commenting on planning applications as they arise, the next significant issue is the possible change of Parish boundaries and to this end, St Albans have started a consultation which ends at the end of March. To give a flavour, it will review one or more of the following topics, which of course has a potential to alter the wards within Colney Heath Parish boundaries depending on residents' views:

- (a) Creating, merging, altering or abolishing Parishes/Town Councils;
- (b) The naming of Parishes and the style of new Parishes/Town Councils;
- (c) The electoral arrangements for Parishes/Town Councils including: - the ordinary year of election; - the number of Councillors to be elected; and - the warding (if any) of the Parish/Town Councils.
- (d) Grouping Parishes under a common Parish Council or de-grouping Parishes

More details can be found on the St Albans District Council website <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/community-governance-review>

Steve Ross
Secretary SRA



A very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to our members all the residents of Coney Heath!

We hope that, despite the continued presence of Covid in our midst, the current high levels of inflation we are experiencing, and the political uncertainties both local and national, 2022 will be a significantly better year for us all.

Membership update

We need as many residents as possible to join 4ColneyHeath so that our representations of the views of our members to the various authorities will carry much more weight.

PLEASE join and encourage your family members, friends and neighbours to join us.

Membership is free, although donations of all sizes are welcome.

For membership forms please phone Mike Redfern on 07773 327550 or email 4colneyheath@gmail.com

Keeping you informed

Our last newsletter was delivered by volunteers to all households in the village in October, and we distributed an update by email in December. Our next newsletter will be produced and distributed in hardcopy to all households in the village in February. The Colney Heath Parish Council have kindly awarded us a grant that will cover most of the printing costs.

If you have any news or opinions which you would like included, please contact Mike Redfern either by phone (see above) or email

michaelredfern2006@gmail.com

Please also check our website regularly for the most up to date news:

<https://4colneyheath.weebly.com>

Our recent work

Much of our effort has been focused on planning issues and housing developments. These include **Bullens Green Lane**, where with Colney Heath Parish Council we will engage with the builder, Taylor Wimpey, at each opportunity to try to ensure the best outcome from the planning consent which we had strongly opposed.

Bowmans Cross : with Colney Heath Parish Council, St Albans City and District Council and more than 20,000 others, we have objected in the strongest terms to this unwanted proposal in the draft Local Plan by Hertsmere District Council and Urban&Civic plc, a subsidiary of the Wellcome Foundation (not Welcome here!). Hertsmere have withdrawn but will come back.

Tarmac have commenced a consultation with some residents prior to submitting a planning application for 45 houses on land next to the Football Club. Their consultation document can be read here:

<https://4colneyheath.weebly.com/planning.html>

Tarmac are using the Bullens Green Lane Precedent – shortage of housing, little impact on the Green Belt, and claiming we have good public transport!!

This is another piecemeal development that would add more pressure on the overloaded physical and social infrastructure of the village.

We will oppose this application as strongly as we are able.

Consultations have been started by St Albans District Council into Community Governance. This will include reviewing the boundaries of the parishes.

We have had an initial meeting with SADC's Electoral Services team which was informative and will prove useful for the consultation process.

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH USING A SMART PHONE / TABLET / COMPUTER?

With so much now available online - keeping in touch with family and friends, information, news, shopping etc – having and knowing how to use digital technology is helpful, and with some things becoming necessary.

“Digital exclusion” is a concern shared by more than just a few people.

The Colney Heath Community Support Group has funds received from the Herts Rural Support Network.

An idea is provide simple and practical help to people who

- a. want to use the internet, e-mail etc but are hesitant and concerned, and
- b. need more guidance in using a smart phone, a tablet or a computer.

FREE HELP AND GUIDANCE would be provided by local volunteers sharing their experience in using digital technology.

The workshops would be held in the Studio at the Colney Heath Village Hall. Daytime or evening sessions would be arranged to suit.

Interested in getting this support?

Willing to help support others?
(we are not looking for “experts”!)

This would be a great example of how our community could work together.

Contact John Clemow tel : 07803 313 525 or e-mail
jackclemow@gmail.com

OUR EXHIBITION AT HATFIELD STATION

If you happen to use Hatfield Station, in one of the empty shops in the entrance foyer, you may have seen our exhibition. This includes the designs for posters by Art and Design students at Oaklands College.



IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND SMALLFORD STATION

This exciting collaborative project is taking far longer than we had expected, and we're still not sure when we'll be able to start work and you'll be able to see the results!

We are involved in continuing, detailed discussions with the Estates Department of St Albans District Council (SADC). Once we have the full agreement from SADC Planning (on discharge conditions), the Estates Department will be undertaking substantial work on the platform as described below.

The end of the platform (by the car park entrance) will be rebuilt – forming a square end (rather than the current round one) and replacing the current concrete blocks with engineering brickwork

All uneven edging blocks will be levelled

The platform will be resurfaced

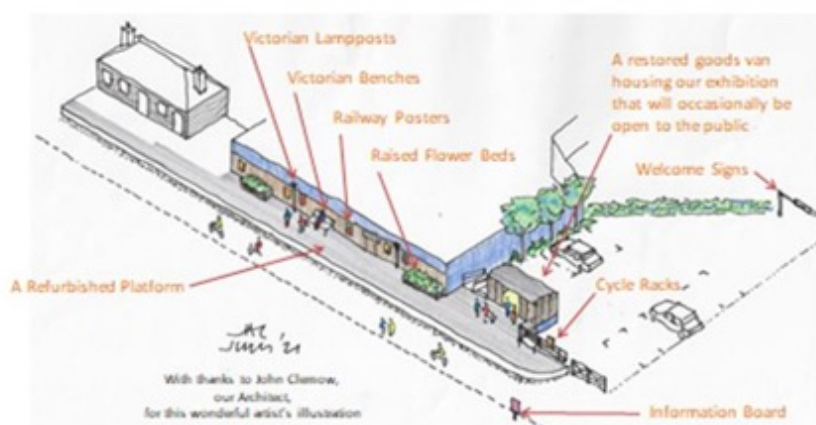
A small extension to the platform will be built providing space for the public to access the goods van body

Build the foundation on which the goods van will sit

Once the resurfacing work has been completed, we will be able to install the 'furniture' on the platform.



Our Exciting Plans for Smallford Station



We've raised £7,000 and require a further £5,000 to complete this exciting collaborative community project.
You can donate via info@smallford.org



The furniture includes authentic reproductions of items that would have been found on the platform when the railway was running such as Victorian style seating and lampposts, and the train timetable for the last year of operation.

Poster boards with superb designs by art students at Oaklands College will animate the platform back wall. Planting beds will provide natural vegetation and colour.

COLLABORATING WITH OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Art and Design Level 2 students participated in a competition to design art-deco-style railway posters and we chose five of them to be displayed on the platform alongside the items of 'furniture'.

The enlarged designs were printed and displayed at our 'Heritage Open Day' Exhibition on Sunday 12th September. Here they are pictured on the railing to the back of the platform.



Beginning next month (February), Horticulture Students will start working on the embankment that runs along the car park. This will be under the guidance of Heidi Carruthers, who has been assigned to SADC as their 'Rewilding Officer'.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

Please contact us via info@smallford.org if you:

- would like more details of this exciting work
- would like a presentation to a group that you're involved with
- would like to be actively involved yourself (design, implementation, maintenance...)
and it would obviously assist us if you would let us know how you would like to be involved together with any particular skills and interest that you could offer.

have ideas/suggestions to contribute....

Jeff Lewis: Chair
Smallford Station & Alban Way Heritage Society
info@smallford.org

Author and local historian Ruth Herman writes.

After the sell-out success of two print runs of the first volume of *Colney Heath Chronicles* we decided to produce another one. This time it covers the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and showcases stories, triumphs, disasters, mishaps and mistakes that have gone into making the village we are all so fond of.

Let me give you a taste of some of the entertaining, sad and just plain weird things previous villagers got up to.

Are you interested in hearing the unfortunate story of the world's most incompetent and unluckiest spy? Or how we had a sea-faring hero in our midst? Your curiosity will be answered along with some evidence on the Luftwaffe's competence in map reading.

While we are talking about the war, what would you do if one of your chums brought a live bomb, newly dopped by the Luftwaffe, into school. This really did happen. We're lucky the school building is still in one piece.

And talking of school, we all know that the present building is not the original one, but do you know how Victorian schools were run? All will be in my next book.

Do you know many pubs there were in the village? More than enough for the number of drunk and disorderly arrests to be alarmingly high. Crimes committed in the village included murder and housebreaking.

I'm not suggesting that all these misdemeanours were fuelled by alcohol. But one person was certainly hauled up before the courts for selling beer on Christmas Day.

On a more sober note, do you like fast motorbikes? Alas no longer there but there was a speedway track where the University of Hertfordshire de Havilland campus is now. If you like your races a little slower but just as exhilarating, there was also a greyhound track.

And here's a conundrum: where should you keep a dead body until you had somewhere to put it permanently? There is some advice on how to avoid losing the corpse.

Once again, I was surprised at the level of activity such a small hamlet. There were only 853 souls in the 1891 census. Even if we assume two parents and two children that only gives us 200 houses and we know that often families were considerably larger than a mere two offspring.

The Colney Heath & District History Society is hoping to bring this second volume out in a few months.

Put your name on the list and be among the first to see it. If you want a signed copy let us know. Contact jackclemow@gmail.com to be sure to get your copy.



And here is a photo of the Franklins, a village family, in their splendid motor.



New Year, New You! Why not try the WI?

For more details contact
Joanna 07956502369
Debbie 01727824185
colneyheathwi@gmail.com

We meet on the second Thursday of each month 7.30 for 7.45 at the Village Hall in the High Street, come along to give us a try. Your first visit is free and there will be cake!

We are a friendly bunch of local women who meet every month in Colney Heath Village Hall to socialise, learn new things and above all have fun. In addition to monthly meetings we have a **lively book club**, a cosy **craft group** and a daring **drama group**.

We also have **regular outings** and get involved in **local events**. Recently we celebrated the festive season in style with a meal out at the Sibthorpe Arms, a Christmas party at the Village Hall with delicious food provided by the Crooked Billet and a Christmas Lights tour of St Albans followed by drinks in our local hostelry.



Our **2022 Programme** is looking good and promises to be interesting, informative and thoroughly enjoyable.

January: Seated exercises with Sarah Donnelly
February: Colney Heath WI Drama group will entertain!
March: our 69th birthday party with Acapella Group, Welwyn Accord

April: Ceri Noor with a Macrame workshop
May: AGM
June: A schoolgirl's war by Mary Smith
July: Gaye Illsley on lasting power of attorney
August: no meeting
September: Jeff Lewis on NLP
October: a talk on Badgers
November: Pam Crofts on lace making
December: Christmas Party



If you're still not sure about attending a meeting the following poem by a WI member Valerie Hughes might help you decide:

I've never worn pearls or owned a twin suit
I'm not good at cooking cake made with fruit
I have no idea what to do with flowers
And to do a crossword would take me hours

My house is slightly tatty round the edges
And there are several dead flies on the window ledges
I wouldn't know what to do with a lump of dough
And I am very limited to what I can sew

However I do like making new friends
And my ideas for recycling never end
I have heard interesting talks
And been on sponsored walks

I've become far more socially aware
And had too much tea and cake but I don't care
After 100 years plus it is still going strong
So they've obviously not done anything wrong

I'm so glad I joined the WI
Why don't you give it a try?

Colney Heath Theatre Club is a not-for-profit organisation which has been running trips from the village and local area to see a range of shows in the West End for the past fifteen years.

After a hiatus caused by lockdown, we returned to Theatreland in November to see *The Drifters Girl*, a musical about the career of the popular US R&B and soul act. It was a great show and we particularly enjoyed being able to return to the West End, arriving in ample time to enjoy a meal, a drink or venture into a few shops before the show began.



Looking forward with a degree of optimism, we have booked tickets to see **Pretty Woman** on 7th April 2022 at The Savoy Theatre which is already sold out.

Hot off the press, we have just booked tickets for **Dirty Dancing** which is running for a limited time at The Dominion Theatre. Tickets are available at £44.00. This includes travel to and from the venue by coach.

We provide a comfortable and convenient way to enjoy an evening in the West End. There are various boarding points in Colney Heath, Smallford and Colney Heath Lane for many a door to service!

If you would like to receive information on the theatre trips please either email colneyheaththeatreclub@yahoo.co.uk or telephone/text 07870701118





About half our members do not “twin” so we are equally a local community social group and a twinning organization. You are welcome to join our local social events, some of which are covered on the next page.

You will have passed the “Welcome to Colney Heath” signs at the entrance to the village whenever you enter the village. You may have not noticed the small text “Twinned with Boissy-sous-St Yon”, and if you did, have you ever wondered why?

The friendship with Boissy began in 1981 when a delegation from Boissy sous St Yon visited Colney Heath hoping to find families who would exchange. Some people may think twinning is just for Councillors to have a paid “jolly” over there at the tax payers expense but the CBTA is run by entirely by volunteers.

When a family wishes to twin we find a family that should be a good fit, similar in age and background. Many of our members have become great friends with their twin family over the years.

Our social events are budgeted to cover the actual costs. Fund raising for our exchange with Boissy is through our 100 Club and other initiatives such as the Old Colney Heath calendar which we used to produce.

There are several families with children in France who wish to “twin” with a family in Colney Heath.

This is a great opportunity for families in Colney Heath, here are a few comments from our members
“We found the people in France are really friendly and welcoming”

“I still don’t speak any French but that has not been an issue”

“When we visit our family they take us to places that are far better than the obvious tourist traps”

“Being exposed to French culture through twinning has widened our children’s education and made their life experiences richer”

“Our son became fluent in French and through this has become a partner in a large law firm in London”

“We have been on several holidays with our friends to parts of France that English people don’t necessarily see”

“We have made lifelong friends”

We have left the EU but we are still Europeans whether we voted Remain or Leave in 2016. Since 1982 Colney Heath has enjoyed a special relationship with the people in Boissy. Boissy is about the same size as us, and about the same distance from Paris as we are from London. It even has a disused railway nearby. And a strong sense of community. We enjoy our differences and our mutual love of wine, good food, and convivial (but its best not mention “fishing” at the moment).



*Enjoy yourself, it's later than you think
Enjoy yourself, while you're still in the pink
The years go by, as quickly as you wink
Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself, it's later than you think*

SO IF YOU'D LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THE GREAT TIMES TO BE HAD TWINNING
CONTACT lewislesley@hotmail.co.uk



The CBTA is a local organisation providing opportunities to meet and socialise in the local community of Colney Heath and optionally with the community of Boissy in France. Membership is not required to enjoy our social events, which are not priced to be fundraisers.



NEXT EVENT : OUR VERY POPULAR QUIZ NIGHT – 19th MARCH

This may be in the Colney Heath Village Hall or on Zoom. Always enjoyed by everyone, our Quiz night features a range of questions suitable for all interests.

If possible we will hold it in the Village Hall with food that is always enjoyed (do not eat before).

Obviously it will be free on Zoom and very modestly priced at £7 per person if held in the Village Hall

lewislesley@hotmail.co.uk for more details

AGM JANUARY 2022

In January we held our AGM. We had hoped Zoom was a thing of the past but some members were concerned about the current omicron variant of Covid. The one benefit was more members attended than had we met in the Village Hall.

Our chair since October 2016, John Clemow who continues as a committee member, handed over to Graeme Shaw who was elected as the Chair along with Alun Puddefoot (Vice Chair), Lesley Lewis (Secretary), Sue Rowland (Treasurer), Mary Baillie, Pam Fox, Judy Puddefoot and Flori Solomon.

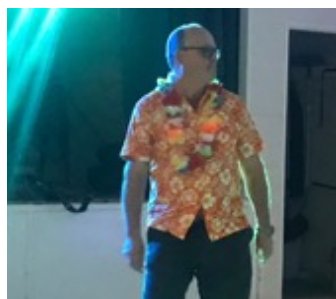
CARIBBEAN THEMED CHRISTMAS DINNER AND DISCO

Our annual Christmas event on 4th December in the Village Hall included a welcome glass of fizz, Caribbean food provided by Sonia McDonnell who provides "Mama Cynth's Caribbean Street Food" in Colney Heath Village

Sonia cooked a superb meal with a gently spiced fish dish and not so gently spiced mutton curry along with mounds of hot vegetables and dumplings. Concluding with a pudding and rum punch it took a while to settle before the lively disco got us up dancing



We take safety seriously when decorating the hall



Graeme Shaw in the mood

LE WEEKEND IN BOISSY

At the end of October three families including our Chair and Vice Chair travelled by Eurostar to Paris where we were met by the President of the Boissy association, Nicolas and his colleague Maria. They escorted us to catch the local train to the station at Egly where we were met by the French families we are twinned with. We had brought the cold and rainy weather with us but this did not prevent the usual trips to local markets, visiting friends for afternoon tea, etc. It was so good "to meet again".

On Saturday night we joined 24 local members for a feast of Portuguese style suckling pig in a new, purpose built, dining hall with a kitchen one would find in a large hotel. Completed as the pandemic started in the Spring of 2020 we were the first to use it. The French know how to look after their villages. President Nicolas had prepared the customary welcome speech catching our Chair, John, on the hop. He had to quickly prepare a few words and use Google translate before delivering his thanks in French (he understands little French and speaks even less). Judy Puddefoot came to his rescue and elaborated our thanks and well wishes in her fluent French.

This was an informal visit to keep the flame of our friendships alive so a big dinner was unexpected.



We hate masks but on Eurostar "rules is rules"



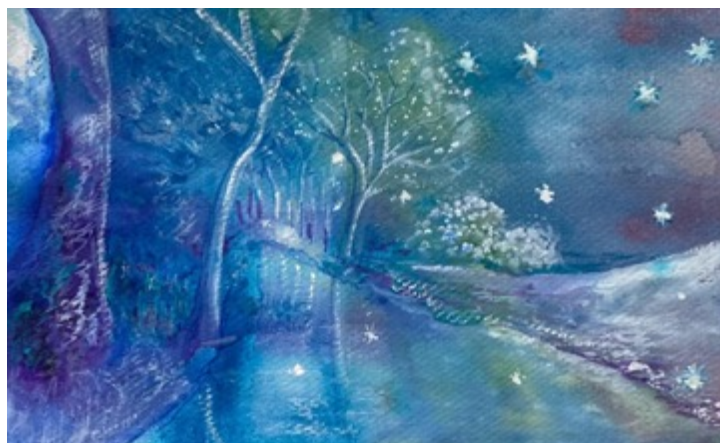
Salut! The feast in the community dining hall

We are all amateur artists of varying ability. Beginners are welcome, and will quickly improve with the help and support of the members of the group. We have list of what you really need to get started so check with us before you buy anything.

We meet in the Studio at the Village Hall the first and third Wednesday in every month.

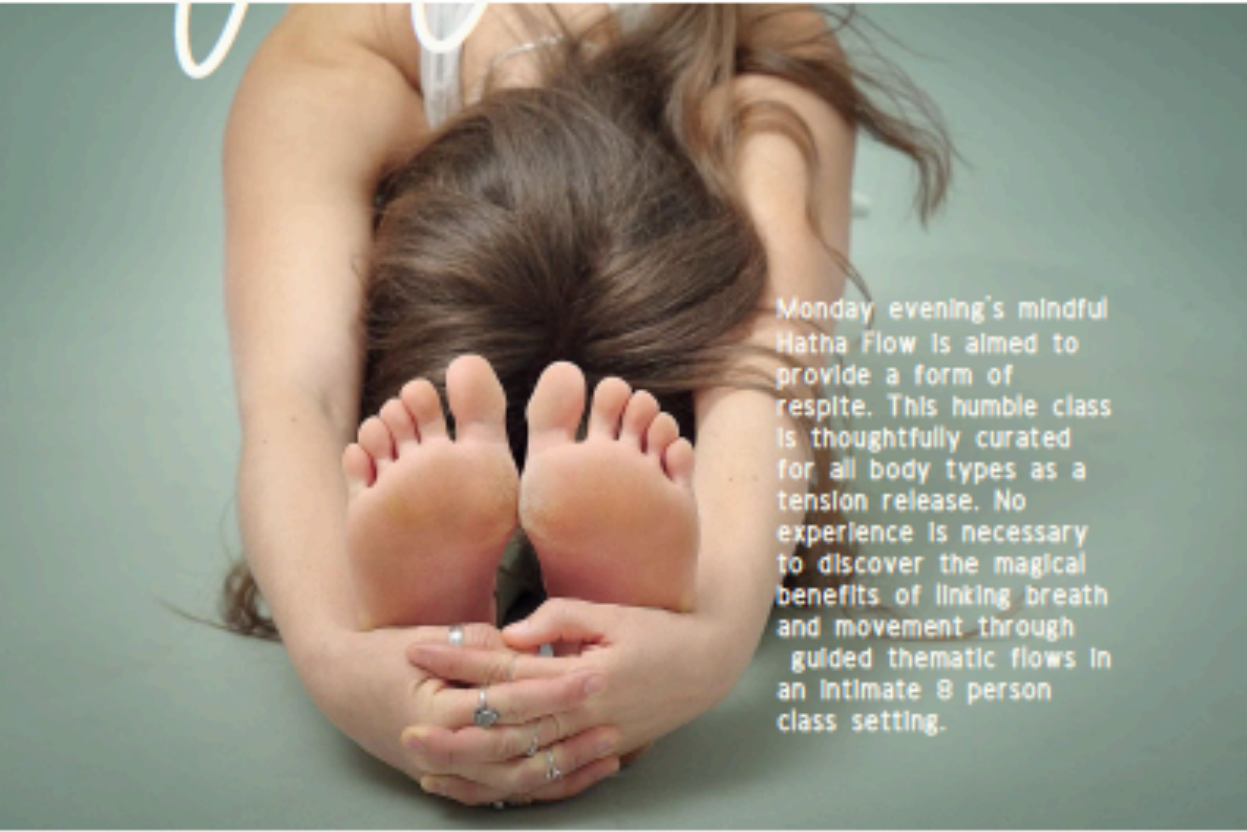
It costs just £3 per session and you only pay the sessions that you attend. Contact irisbond8@gmail.com

Its not surprising that our members have been working on winter scenes but other subjects have also interested them. These are a few examples of the art works.



yoga

WITH EMMA



Monday evening's mindful Hatha Flow is aimed to provide a form of respite. This humble class is thoughtfully curated for all body types as a tension release. No experience is necessary to discover the magical benefits of linking breath and movement through guided thematic flows in an intimate 8 person class setting.

Mondays
18:30-19:30

Colney Heath
Village Hall

Drop In £12
5 classes £50

Contact to sign up or request private sessions
Call/Text 07453308193 or DM @Yoga.withEmma

Photo by Paul Ottavio • Colney Heath • www.kodakline.com

The New Year brings exciting changes at COLNEY CUTS!

Located in the High Street in the centre of Colney Heath village, the Salon has just been refurbished and refreshed ready for 2022.

Both new and former Clients, are welcome.

Please call anytime on 01727 826 600 to make an appointment, alternatively walk-ins may be accommodated.

Colney Cuts is a Unisex Hair Salon.

Our offer includes

- ◇ Cuts and Colours (highlights, tints, and semi permanent colours).
- ◇ Permanent Waves for both Ladies and Men
- ◇ Clipper Cuts
- ◇ Shampoo and Sets

All tastes and styles, from modern to traditional, are catered for.

Anita has over 30 years experience owning a Salon. She spent 10 years training and working in London and has taught hairdressing at a high level.

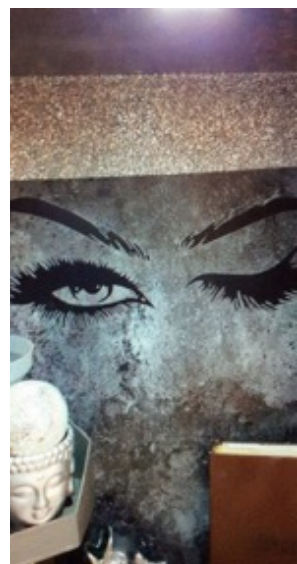
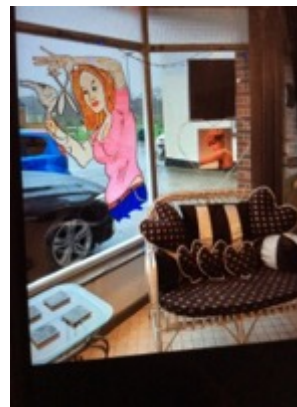
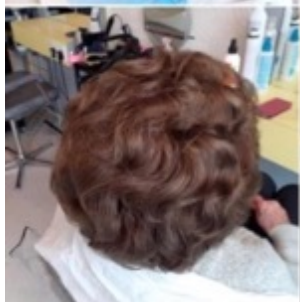
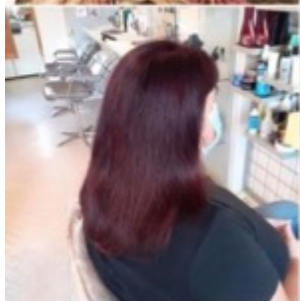
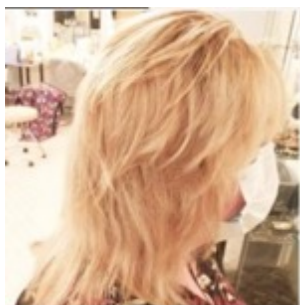
Anita specialises in hair colouring.

Anita says

"the safety of my clients has always been my first priority, and this is all the more important in the current situation. Professionalism, skill and experience are key to what we do at Colney Cuts - along with the passion I have for my work.

I feel very fortunate to be part of the village".

Anita is currently looking for a part time nail technician.
Please call 01727 826 600





Nicky Packman

07973 102313

nicky@nickypackman.com

www.shop.nickypackman.com



I've lived in Colney Heath for 17 years and work from home as a part-time distributor of a wide range of award-winning Aloe Vera & Beehive based products under the umbrella of Forever Living Products ... from skincare and personal care products to nutritional supplements and weight management support – and of course not forgetting our flagship aloe drinking gels - there's a lot to choose from! None of our products or ingredients are tested on animals. If you've never tried anything from the range, then these are a good place to start – some of my customer favourites over the years please do get in touch if I can help!

ALOE VERA GELLY is moisturising, conditioning and soothing for all skin types - it works particularly well for sore, irritated skin and burns, or as part of a general first-aid kit. It's a clear gel which doesn't stain clothing and is as close to pure, inner leaf aloe as you can get.

ALOE HEAT LOTION is non-greasy and is perfect for a deep, relaxing massage. It goes on cool, with aloe and menthol to soothe on contact with the skin, and then warms up while ingredients like eucalyptus relax the muscles and create a naturally aromatic experience. Perfect for before and after exercise, or for anyone who generally suffers from aches and pains. My top tip ... apply a small amount to your temples and back of your neck if you have of a headache.

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ALOE PROPOLIS CREME contains two of our most prized ingredients: pure inner leaf aloe vera gel and bee propolis. Together they help to soothe and nourish very dry skin and promote beautiful tone and texture. Suitable for hands, face and body.

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ALOE EVER-SHIELD DEODORANT has a lovely fresh scent and offers protection against underarm odour with the soothing power of aloe – plus it's made without aluminium salts, meaning it's gentle to use for sensitive skin and after shaving and waxing. One stick lasts for several months and it won't stain your clothes.

FOREVER BRIGHT TOOTHGEL is gentle and effective because we include natural ingredients - aloe and bee propolis – plus it's fluoride-free, meaning the whole family can use it, including pets! With fresh peppermint and spearmint flavouring, it's a great way to help fight plaque and support gum health as part of a regular brushing routine. It can of course be alternated with a fluoride toothpaste if desired.



Our village pub is thriving! We have a splendid selection of great beers and a very warm and friendly welcome.

Sandra is running the bar with Wally and there's a great team of lively people to look after you.

Caroline is doing a great job with the food offering. Home cooked meals and snacks on Wednesday to Saturday lunchtimes with excellent roasts on Sundays which are so popular that we now have two sittings.

There are also themed evenings with such favourites as Pie and Mash! Look out for notices outside the pub.

The whole team is looking forward to spring and summer when customers will be able to enjoy food and drinks outside in the lovely garden.

But don't wait until then, come and enjoy everything the Billet has to offer right now.