



**ISSUE 10**

**OCTOBER 2021**

### **BOWMANS CROSS**

**NEW TOWN PROPOSED ON GREENFIELD  
LAND IN THE GREENBELT ON COURSERS  
ROAD : JOINING COLNEY HEATH WITH  
LONDON COLNEY**

**6<sup>th</sup> December deadline for comments and  
objections to Hertsmere Borough Council**

See page 4 for meetings, information etc

### **FIND BACK ISSUES**

If you are a new or recent reader Editions 1 to  
9 can be found on the "Coal Post" tab on the  
Colney Heath Village Hall website  
[www.colneyheathvillagehall.com](http://www.colneyheathvillagehall.com)



Autumnal mist on the Common, photo credit Patricia Day

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Please share this newsletter and print pages for folk who don't use the internet or don't have e-mail.

Contact us if you have a story, would like to promote an organisation, an event or a cause, or to advertise a local service or business (there is no charge for inclusion in this digital format)

**or if you spot any errors or have comments**

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Roundhouse Farm field on Bullens Green Lane, greenfield farmland in the Greenbelt, soon to be concreted over with 100 houses, roads and parking spaces. A precedent already being used for planning applications for fields in the Greenbelt.

The summer, now a fading memory, brought sunshine and warmth. With the restrictions lifted it was time to meet friends, to live more freely - screens, masks etc in restaurants have gone, there are no queues outside at supermarkets and inside many shoppers are not wearing masks. Staycationing meant crowds at the seaside, and exorbitant prices for accommodation if one could find a vacancy. Some travelled abroad and self-isolated on return, bearing the cost of PCR tests before and after travel.

Others enjoyed more local pleasures – the excellent coffee and wonderful cakes at CUP in Colney Heath High Street becoming a favourite for many villagers. The village shop and post office returned to normal opening times.

The “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” has arrived. Thanks and credit to Patricia Day for the moody cover photo.



The photo of this beauty was taken by Chris and Jen Coffey in Roestock Lane. A sign of the “Wilding” of Colney Heath? See Derrick Crump’s article on this on page 21

Not so pretty was the drive-by shooting at The Rice, our local Indian Takeaway, reported on Colney Heath Village Facebook earlier in October. Fortunately only the shop front was damaged. Ruth Herman’s book Colney Heath Chronicles (see page 28) tells us of a more violent past.

For some, the lockdown has brought permanent changes, working from home for part or all of the week. The Colney Heath village hall will be trialing a “work-near-to-home” facility in the New Year. The idea is people working from home may need a bit of peace and quiet - and when there is competition for desk space and bandwidth from other family members.

Contact [jackclemow@gmail.com](mailto:jackclemow@gmail.com) for details.

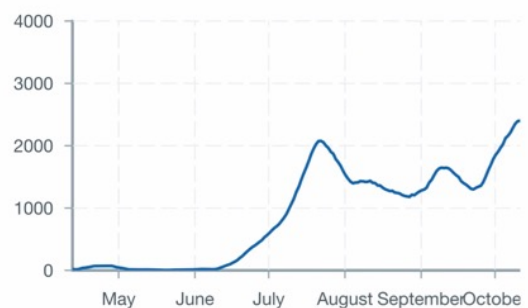
Speeding on the High Street and Tollgate Road featured high on residents’ concerns in the survey by 4ColneyHeath residents’ association issued in the Spring. The Parish Council have already taken action.

Bigger issues of concern raised were the proposed 6,000 houses on the Bowmans Cross development between Colney Heath and London Colney – see page 4. We expect many objections will be made. The Greenbelt and our environment are high priorities for many residents who understand the importance and value of our environment. Nearly 300 people requested their names be added to the “Colney Heath Precedent” letter being sent to members of parliament – see page 29

Since our last issue in May life for many has adjusted to the “new normal”. Good to see activity returning to the Charles Morris Hall, see page 14. For some life has returned to something like the “old normal”. The serious effects of Covid-19 are not widely experienced by younger people. Older people feel relieved of precautions by the protection of being double jabbed. We seem to be learning to live with, or ignoring, Covid. Meanwhile, the infection rate continues to rise.

### Active COVID cases in St Albans

This graph shows you daily cases smoothed over 14 days



**2402** Active cases in your area

Up by 378 from last week

### We say GET JABBED!

Although post-COVID conditions appear to be less common in children and adolescents than in adults, long-term effects after COVID-19 do occur in children and adolescents.

Double jabbed people have been infected but the effects seem to be reduced. Everyone who is eligible for their top-up jab can now book an appointment [online](#) or by ringing 119 for a booster dose if it has been at least six months (182 days) since they had their second dose of the vaccine.

## A NEW TOWN ON COURSERS ROAD?

View Hertsmere Borough Council's draft Local Plan on this link – see page 49

<https://4colneyheath.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/9/2/109264595/20210925-hertsmere-s-draft-local-plan-september-2021.pdf>

Hertsmere Borough Council have issued their draft Local Plan 2022-2038 for “consultation”. This includes their proposal for the Bowman's Cross “new settlement” along Coursers Road on

**GREENFIELD LAND IN THE GREENBELT** joining London Colney with Colney Heath. By the House of Commons Library classification this will be a new small town (population between 7,500 and 25,000)

**6th December deadline** for comments and objections to Hertsmere e-mail [local.plan@hertsmere.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@hertsmere.gov.uk) or by post to Planning Policy and Transport Team, Hertsmere Borough Council, Civic Offices, 3 Elstree way, Borehamwood, WD6 9SR. We recommend both e-mail and by signed-for letter so it is not “lost”.

### **FIND OUT MORE**

**9<sup>th</sup> November 7.00pm**

**Public meeting Colney Heath JMI school**

**10<sup>th</sup> November 7.00pm**

**London Colney Parish Council meeting in the Caledonian Club**

**Saturday 20 November 11.30am – 5.30pm**

**“Drop-in event” in London Colney, Caledon Community centre,  
by the developer, Urban and Civic**

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 1.00pm-7.00pm**

**“Drop-in event” in the Colney Heath Village Hall  
By the developer, Urban and Civic**

Claims from the draft Local Plan – see page 49 in the link above

A few key points to note

Estimated new dwellings 2021/2-2037/8    2,400  
Households total 6,000  
Population Projected by the mid-2050's    c.14,000

Employment office units (15,000 sq m), leisure and cultural facilities (6,000 sq m), convenience retail and dining (7,000 sq m)

It is noted that the new medical centre in London Colney will serve Bowmans Cross residents but dedicated health facility for Bowmans Cross will be delivered in the 2030s.

Proposed – but not when - are at least 4 primary school sites and at least one site for a secondary school (together with a reserve site for an additional secondary school).

Enhanced public transport through the site will include bus priority measures, pedestrian and cycle links to train stations nearby and other destinations.

### **Read what people are saying**

- CPRE Hertfordshire initial review of Hertsmere's draft Local Plan (6 pages)  
<https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2021/10/Hertsmere-Local-Plan-CPRE-Hertfordshire-Initial-Review-and-Site-Analysis-18-October-2021.pdf>
- Cllr Cook, Colney Heath Parish Council (see page 8)
- Campaign for Colney Facebook page
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/205940479946559>
- Visit [www.savetyttenhanger.co.uk](http://www.savetyttenhanger.co.uk) and sign the petition

Tyttenhanger Gravel Pits facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tyttenhangergps>



The developers, Urban and Civic plc say *“the proposed site is shown (on the right) but less than 50% of the area will be buildings, with green buffers ensuring separation between communities, and extensive green space protecting important spaces for nature and providing open space for people.”*

The image below shows the approximate site boundary around greenfields in the Greenbelt with the partial area of quarry works.



There are many very significant issues, concerns and questions about this proposal.

PLEASE

Make time to find out more, and then

**SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS AND OBJECTIONS BEFORE 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

### WHAT WAS £100,000+ CASH SPENT ON?

From the Parish Council's website

#### *Parish Council Press statement*

*This statement covers the period from 1st April 2004 until 10th July 2015 (which covers the late Clerk John Deans tenure of Clerk to CHPC) and ultra vires payments made during the period totalling £ £254,767.29 (Note 1) representing between 15% to 25% of the Parish precept every year in that period (Note 2). This is detailed in the attached report.*

In the press statement there is no mention of the £100,000+ petty cash. You have to get to page 6 of the report to find the following

*"Over £100,000 was taken from the NatWest bank account in petty cash. Most were signed with the cheque photocopied on the back of the payment approval sheet but there are no records of what this money was used for".*

**A response to a Freedom of Information request clarified that the petty cash amount was in addition to the £254,767.29 and** *"The Parish Council do not hold records to be able to provide an accurate sum of the petty cash withdrawn from 2004-2015 which is why the estimate of over £100,000 was used within the report".*

### TONY BURNS ELECTED UNOPPOSED

Tony Burns, long standing resident in Colney Heath village, was elected unopposed in September to the vacant seat in Colney Heath ward. Read the Q&A with Tony on page 13.

### THE SCOUTS

The proposal by Cllr Graeme Shaw on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October was *"To resume the negotiations with the Scouts on the Heads of Terms agreement for a short-term agreement to occupy the Roestock Hut until such time as it is required to build a new facility on the site, or to meet any other agreed plans that arise from the Public Consultation."*

The Scouts will have found the discussion disappointing as a number of reasons were given why negotiations will not resume.

### LEGAL CLAIM AGAINST THE VILLAGE HALL

Having refused to mediate with the Colney Heath Village Hall, in January 2021 the Parish Council issued a legal claim to most of the Village Hall charity trustees in post in December 2017 Chris Brazier (former Parish Councillor), Dennis Horner (former Parish Councillor), Pam Fox, Gerry Savage (WI committee), Eddie Walsh, Sophie Yates (owner of Treasure Tots pre-school).

Also named in the legal claim was the booking clerk Audrey Fowler, who was not a trustee. Named but not served with the claim were two other trustees your co-editor John Clemow and Anne Jarman.

Obviously having a legal claim against one in the County Court can be distressing especially if you are in your 80's, are frail, or a fearful mother of 3 young children.

At the Emergency Council Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September the Parish Council decided that subject to agreement for parties to agree to pay their own costs and take no further action the legal case would be withdrawn. The trustees have spent a substantial sum on legal fees to defend the case but agreed to bear their own costs.

This matter is settled.

### EVICTED FROM COLNEY HEATH VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall issued a s.25 notice to terminate the Council's occupation of the office space at the village hall (see the report from the Village Hall on page 15 for the reasons).

At the Emergency Council Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September the Councillors unanimously resolved to accept the eviction notice issued by Village Hall and have vacated the space.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

At the Parish Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September the Parish Council decided to appoint a commercial company to conduct a survey of residents' views both online and in hardcopy.

The agenda item does not make it clear what issues will be consulted upon but it is expected to include land owned by the Parish such as Gloucester Park and Horseshoe Field, and the proposed Community Hub (see right column).

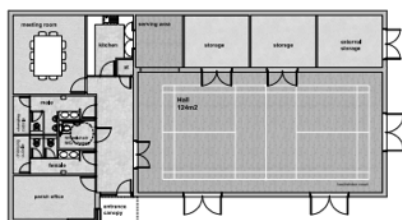
## NEW COMMUNITY BUILDING IN ROESTOCK PARK?

From the Parish Council's website

### *"Roestock Hut*

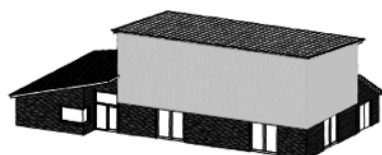
*Due to some misreporting over the weekend and in order to clarify the current situation with the hut in Roestock Park, the Parish Council make the following statement:*

*The Parish Council have offered to build a new community building 1.5 times larger than the current hut with indoor sport facilities, more storage and inclusion of disabled access and facilities. It is hoped that this proposed community hub will still go ahead after a public consultation of all residents of the Parish. Any new building would be developed in conjunction with the Scout and Guide groups who raised funds, contributed to the fabric of and have been resident in the old and well loved building for many years."*



Floor Plan  
1:100

Proposed Internal Cross Floor Area - 285sqm  
Existing hut - approximately 205sqm



Sketch Aerial View

Plan and sketch of the proposed new Community hub

An open letter was sent by one of your editors to the Parish Council which was discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The Councillors expressed appreciation and noted its contents. However, the agenda for the meeting contains an abridged version and omits several important points.

Read the full text of the letter here

<https://jackclemow.weebly.com/comment.html>

## Will it be a liability?

To summarise, the Parish Council should provide their business case for this proposal – to demonstrate the expected income from lettings and the impact of the construction cost, and more important, the annual running costs on the Parish's accounts.

Before residents can sensibly respond to the Public Consultation on this proposal they should know if the proposal is financially viable – or if it is not, how much it will need to be subsidized from the tax payers' money that makes up the Council's income.

We think the business case should have been prepared before spending money to appoint an architect to do a design. We are also surprised to hear that the architect was verbally instructed and no record of what they were asked to design is available.



### BOWMANS CROSS NEW SMALL TOWN ON COURSERS ROAD

Unusually the Parish Council have waded in with “political” comments, reflecting the many concerns about Hertsmere Borough Council’s proposal for a “new settlement” of 6,000 houses along Coursers

**To find out more See page 4**

Cllr Cook does not mince his words in standing up for our community. In case you missed it, the following statement is on the Parish Council’s website.

*Colney Heath Parish Council remains opposed to the proposed development of 6000 homes at Bowmans Cross, on the boundary with Colney Heath and London Colney.*

*Councillor Peter Cook, Chairman of the Parish Council said, “One could easily conclude the Hertsmere Cabinet selected Bowmans Cross first and asked officers to write the report to reach the required result. It is a shrewd political move by Cllr Bright to ensure no opposition from Hertsmere electorate as no one lives in or near to the quarry and it reduces pressure on Radlett, Elstree, Bushey, and Potters Bar which are unsurprisingly the areas which most of their Cabinet represent.*

*The Garden village proposal evidence in the document shows poor sustainability of the site, harm to the Green Belt and major traffic issues – hardly a ringing endorsement for the Garden Village proposal. The site was initially promoted by an absentee land owner who stands to make considerable money from the land having already made it the rubbish dump of Hertfordshire with landfill, Bio digester and composting units. As far as our research there are no other UK examples of housing being built on the site of a former quarry.*

*All the local roads already suffer from delays and congestion so building the proposed new Garden Village will make things much worse for residents not only in Colney Heath and London Colney but the wider area due to wide use of the immediate roads as ‘rat runs’ trying to avoid the delay of existing network.*

*We demand that our residents are properly consulted, given the impact that the development will have on the area including the increase in traffic movements through the village of Colney Heath.”*

*Colney Heath Parish Council will continue to work with London Colney Parish Council to fight this development and will be jointly organising public meetings for residents to have their say. We would welcome Hertsmere Borough Councillors to attend these meetings.*

## SOON TO BE BUT A SAD MEMORY



Kim Channon photographed the sun setting on the field between Bullens Green Lane and Roestock Park, a greenfield in the Greenbelt, soon to be a construction site for around 100 houses.



### Current position in 2021

St Albans City and District Council has a number of “wards” represented by District Councillors. The Colney Heath District Council ward is currently represented by Chris Brazier and Jamie Day.

The District ward boundary includes Highfield, Tyttenhanger Green, Oaklands, Smallford, Sleepshyde and Oaklands to the north of the A414 and Colney Heath village on the South side of the A414.

The boundary of the Colney Heath Parish Council is currently the same the Colney Heath District ward boundary as shown on Figure 1 below

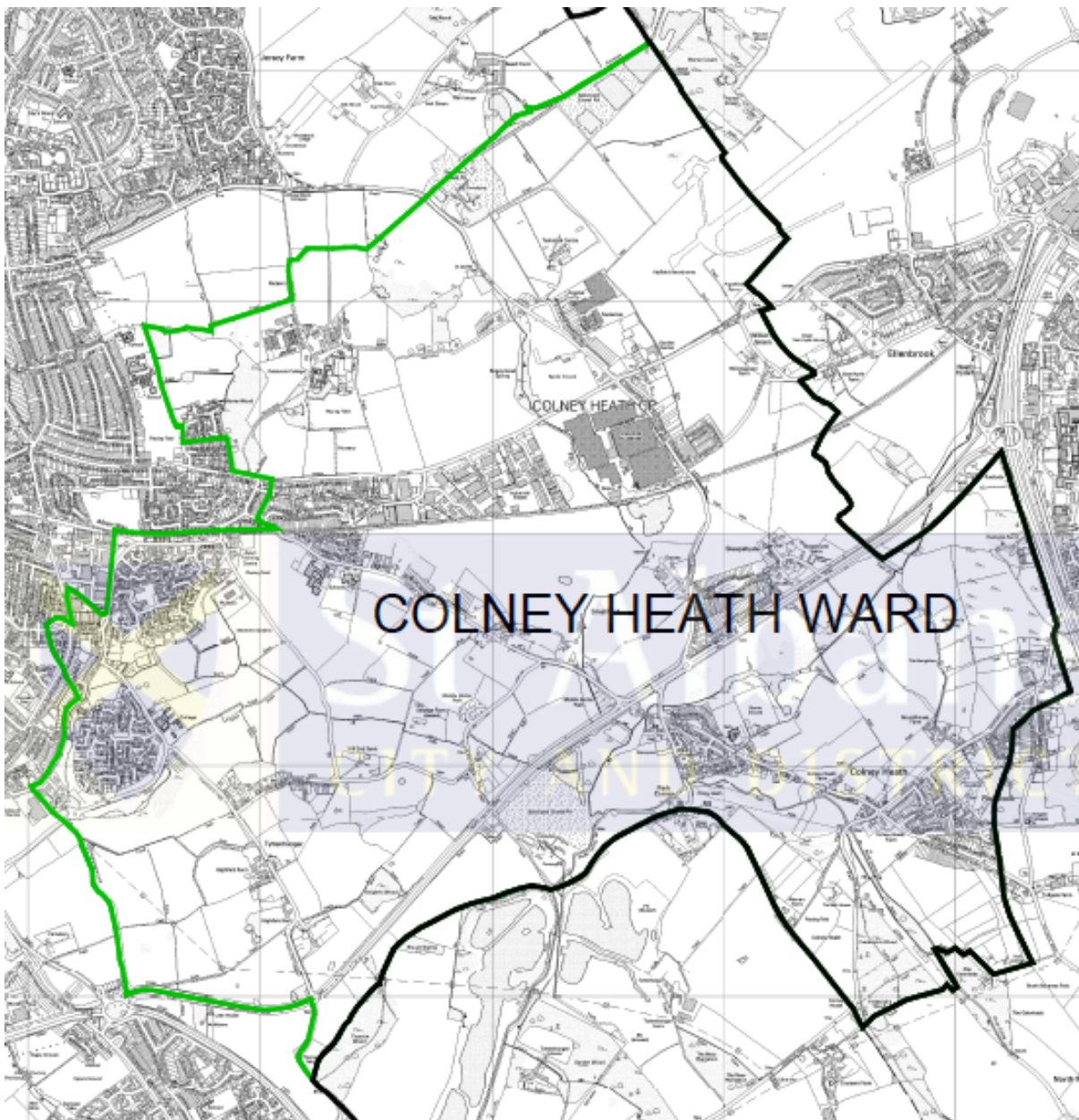


Figure 1 Current Boundaries in 2021  
Boundary of District Council Colney Heath ward and Colney Heath Parish Council

## The change to the District Council ward boundary

For the District Council elections to be held in May 2022 the Colney Heath ward will be “rural” area : Tyttenhanger Green, Smallford, Sleapshyde and Colney Heath village as shown on Figure 2 below

## Community Governance Review

St Albans District Council Electoral Services is conducting a Community Governance Review. This can consider a number of issues, including whether to alter the boundary of the existing parish.

## Indicative timetable

The initial public consultation will be carried out by the end of March 2022 and the process is planned to be complete for a decision by SADC by the end of 2022.

## Our opinion

Your editors believe that boundary of Colney Heath Parish should be altered to be the same as the District ward boundary to form a “rural parish council” covering Tyttenhanger, Smallford, Sleapshyde and Colney Heath village effective from May 2023.

This would to recognize differences between the community interests : the community in the “urban” area, i.e. Highfield, associate with St Albans City.

The community in the rural area associate with their local settlements (Tyttenhanger Green, Smallford, Sleapshyde and Colney Heath village) while having the commonality of community concerns about protecting and enhancing rural culture and environment.

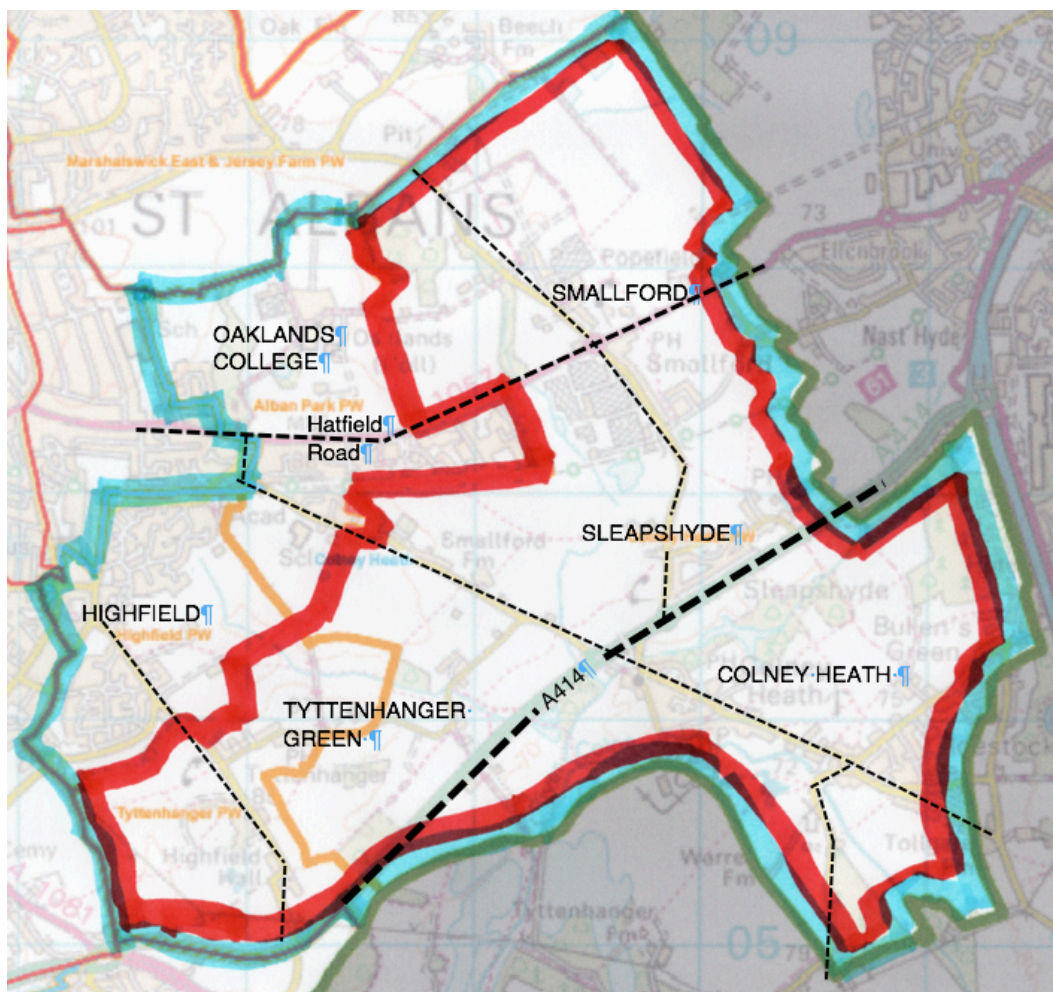


Figure 2 District ward boundary 2022 (outlined in red)



Tony Burns was elected unopposed to the Colney Heath ward of the Parish Council in September 2021.

John

Tony, congratulations on being elected and well done for stepping up for the vacant seat on the Parish Council. Before we discuss why you stood for election, our readers who do not know you will be interested to know something about you and your connection with the village.

Tony

My family and I have lived in the village for over 40 years, initially in Franklin Close, then in Moonrakers and now in Roestock Lane. My children went to the village school and then on to secondary schools in St. Albans. I was on the Governing Body of the school for about 10 years and chaired it for most of that time. I am a long-standing member of the Colney Heath Boissy Twinning Association, which my wife Jackie chaired for several years, and also of Colney Heath Football Club where I lead the darts team.

John

So why do you want to be a Parish Councilor now?

Tony

There has recently been significant turnover of councillors for the Colney Heath ward of the Parish Council, this at a time when issues of great importance are being decided. I believe that it is desirable for the people of the village to have continuing and consistent representation in order that their views are considered in the decision-making process. It seems likely that the coming years will bring change and I hope to be able to play a part in ensuring the best possible outcomes for the village and also the wider parish.

John

From what you have seen so far what do think about the way Parish Council meetings are conducted?

Tony

For reasons relating to completion of formalities, so far I have not been able to participate in a meeting of the full council or of any sub-committee I have, however, attended meetings as a non-participant. It seems to me that the meetings are conducted efficiently, with the Chair giving all councillors the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Meetings appear to follow the agenda closely and decisions are reached by open and fair voting. What I am less clear about is how the agendas are constructed (because this determines what is discussed) and how issues can be placed on an agenda. I hope to learn more about this in due course.



John

You were elected unopposed. Do you feel this to be a disadvantage compared with those Councilors who were elected in a contested election?

Tony

No. My election to the council was a result of due process, overseen by the Electoral Services of St. Albans District Council. My position on the council has the same democratic legitimacy as that of any other councillor.

John

The next Parish Council election will be in 18 months time in May 2023. What do you hope to achieve in this limited time? And what would like to see not happening?

Tony

It seems likely that boundary changes will result in significant changes to the nature of the parish and, in consequence, the Parish Council itself. I think it is important that proper preparations for this change are made in order that the reconstituted council can be effective immediately. I would hope to be able to play a part in this. I am also keen to contribute to efforts to resist large-scale housing developments in and around the village. With regard to the great issue of the day, I will support the case for reconsideration of earlier decisions. We must recognise, however, that in the absence of any major change in the present situation, a majority of councillors consider the matter to be closed. If that remains the case the focus will move towards consideration of future possibilities and I would then seek to ensure a good outcome for the village and the redrawn parish





[www.stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk](http://www.stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk)  
Tel: 01727 825175. Email:  
[office@stmarkscolneyheath.co](mailto:office@stmarkscolneyheath.co).

### 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.

We are delighted that we can begin to re-open some activities and events at the Church. From the 9<sup>th</sup> June we see the return of Smartees, and the evening service, Equip, has now restarted with a series on wellbeing. Men's Breakfast too returns, look on our website for future dates.

If you are interested in finding out more about life and faith please contact us.

In a time of transition many can feel angst and discomfort and when we feel this way, I am reminded that we can trust in God to work all things together for good.

*Jeremiah says, "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek with all your heart."*

*Jeremiah 29 v:11-13*

I pray that as some normality returns to life, you will know your value and the part you play in contributing to a better world. I pray also that you will live in the hope that God has good plans for you and a future. Let us keep being kind, doing good and find peace in that God listens to us when we seek him.



**Revd Caroline Keightley**  
**Vicar, St Mark's Church**



### Christmas Services



**Carol Services with choir** Sunday 19th December at 4.30pm and at 7pm

**Carol singing around the Parish** on Wednesday 22nd December at 6.30pm

*(if you would like to get involved please get in touch!)*

**All-age Christmas Eve service** Friday 24th December at 4pm

**Christmas Day services** at 8.30am and 10.30am.



### **Equip - meets on 1st Sunday of the month at 7pm**

Everyone welcome! We are delighted to announce that Kate Peacock will be talking to us on **6th June** on the theme of emotional wellbeing.



## SMART EES

### **Baby and Toddler Group**

Re-opens on **Wednesday 9th June!**

10am to 11.30am (term time only)

Suggested donation £1 per family, Covid guidelines in place



## CONNECT 20

A social group designed to be fellowship and community for people in their 20's from the local area and beyond. Email the church office for more information.

## Digital and Online

You can view all our Digital Services through St. Mark's You Tube channel or visit our website [www.stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk](http://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](mailto:office@stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk)**



The Charles Morris Hall in Tyttenhanger Green

Like all other village halls, the Charles Morris Hall is slowly getting back to some normality following the various lockdowns. The Hall is used on a regular basis by the local communities for many activities including :

- Socratots, football-related physical development activities for young children aged between six months and five years
- There are three Pilates classes covering most ages.
- The Baby Sensory Classes are hugely popular. Their sessions engage babies, inspire parents and give that truly WOW factor through music, props, puppet shows, lights, bubbles and more!
- Various martial arts groups, including St Albans Ki Aikido, Borehamwood Ki Aikido, Karate and Tae Kwon Do, cater for all ages from children to adults.
- Sweaty Mama & Baby Exercise is a new class starting at the end of October. It is an effective way for mums to exercise with their children, gradually build up their fitness levels, strengthen their core and rehabilitate their body after having a baby. Add upbeat music and likeminded mums and fun is guaranteed.
- There are two very popular Yoga classes
- The watercolour workshop is a 10 week rolling programme covering all aspects of water colour painting.
- At the new Playball sessions, children are helped to develop fundamental building blocks of sport, agility balance and coordination, as well as the three key elements of physical fitness - endurance, strength and flexibility.
- Dawn To Dusk is a self-support group offering refreshments and therapeutic activities for carers, providing a two-hour respite from their caring duties and an opportunity to form friendships with other carers who understand the difficulties faced every day and the feeling of despair they can have at times caring for family or friends.

All the above regular groups use the Hall Monday to Friday while Saturday is kept for the 'casual' one off bookings such as parties, meetings and the occasional wedding reception and is particularly popular for children's parties.

Further information, including booking data, can be found at the hall's web site:

[www.charlesmorrishall.org.uk](http://www.charlesmorrishall.org.uk)

A short version of the history of the Charles Morris Hall starts in 1921 when Charles Morris, who lived at Highfield Hall, made a Deed of Gift of 1.5 acres behind the houses numbering 34 to 52 Tyttenhanger Green, (to the left of the Plough) for the purposes of 19 allotments for the inhabitants of Tyttenhanger and later a charitable trust was created for the Tyttenhanger residents: "The Trustees of Charles Morris for allotments, Tyttenhanger Green".

Sadly Charles Morris died on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1926. In his will he left a piece of land (0.35 acres) "in Tyttenhanger Village which has been fenced off as the site for a village hall", together with another piece of attached land (0.79 acres), "for the benefit of the locality".

This land became vested in the Parish Council, as trustees, thereby creating a charitable trust "for the benefit of the inhabitants of Tyttenhanger Green".

6<sup>th</sup> May 1935 the playing field was opened. A plaque on the original gate bore the words: "In memory of Charles Morris and his wife Edith H. Morris, this playing field was purchased out of a bequest left by him for the benefit of the inhabitants of Tyttenhanger Green."

Over the years the allotments had fallen into disuse and in 1966 the Parish Council sought permission from the Charities Commission, to sell the land. It was the money from this sale that, together with grants, funded the building of the Charles Morris Hall and which was officially opened on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1975, and the following statement was made: "We are indeed delighted to do honour today to the name of Charles Morris, whose generosity so long ago has been the means of creating this fine asset for the residents of Tyttenhanger Green". The photo shows Parish Councillor A.G. Cutmore, his wife and the opening tape being cut by Mr. Herbert Mansell whose family had lived in the village.



We look forward to celebrating the Hall's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025



[www.colneyheathvillagehall](http://www.colneyheathvillagehall) enquiries email [jackclemow@gmail.com](mailto:jackclemow@gmail.com) or call 07803 313 525

Our differences with the Colney Heath Parish Council are, at long last, settled. We can put that unhappy state of affairs of the last 7 years behind us and get on with our work. The legal action against some of the current trustees, and the dispute over the Parish Council's non-payment for the office they used as a storeroom, have been an unwelcome distraction and incurred substantial and unnecessary financial costs. The mental distress suffered by some of the managing trustees who are vulnerable due to old age, sickness and personal circumstances has, to say the least, been unwelcome.

We do not expect an early change in attitude or approach from the Parish Council but we hope that in due course we will return to a good working relationship. We have plans for improvements at the village hall which will need the support of the Parish Council.

We get asked "so what on earth was it all about?". Here we provide what we hope is seen as a fair and objective summary. The full version ranks equal to a Norse saga.

### **The misunderstanding**

In 1947 the Parish Council assumed the role of Custodian Trustee (from the Parish of St. Peter Rural) of the charity that was established in 1938 to build and manage the village hall. The 1938 Trust Deed is written in a way that many Parish Councils, and managing trustees, misinterpret to this day, leading to the mistaken belief that the Custodian Trustee owns a village hall. The role of the Custodian Trustee is simply to "hold the deeds on behalf of the charity".

### **The extension to the hall**

As a millennium project, the village hall was extended to include a meeting room, a kitchen, disabled WC and a storeroom. It also included an

The Parish Council reportedly contributed £56,000, about half of the cost of the project. The minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on 11 September 2002 state *"The Council do not appear to have a lease from the village hall setting out its terms of occupation. Members advised Council own the building & therefore Council advised this is not necessary."* It is easy to see how the misunderstanding of ownership led to the Parish Council paying this proportion of the project cost, thinking perhaps they were investing in "their property".

### **The contribution**

It was however agreed that for use of the office, free-of-charge Parish Council meetings in the meeting room, use of the kitchen etc, the Parish Council would pay the village hall a "contribution" instead of a fixed rent. The contribution was agreed on a formula and was paid by the Parish Council for the invoiced amounts from 2002 to 2015. The formula was based on the cost of the village hall utilities costs. This was a clever and flexible arrangement. These utility costs could rise, or fall, so the contribution related to the village hall's real costs, unlike a rental agreement with a fixed amount. The agreement was not formally documented.

### **The temperature rises**

The Parish Council did get involved with the day to day management of the village hall, and paid for various items. The insurance issue (we won't bore you with the details) in 2014 sparked the start of serious concerns by the managing trustees about interference by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council election in 2015 and the Police investigation in 2016 into suspected fraud at the Parish Council, caused the Councillors to be concerned about many "irregular arrangements"

office to provide access to the Parish Clerk (who had worked from home) and various services to the community.

between the Parish Council and community organizations.

This was necessary but the way it was approached by the Parish Council resulted in considerable legal fees for both the Parish Council and the other parties involved.

### The ownership issue

By 2014 the managing trustees realized that the Custodian Trustee did not own the village hall. The Parish Council had expressed their view that "we own the hall so why should we pay?". The managing trustees tried to engage with the Parish Council to get the matter settled, but to no avail.

In 2015 the managing trustees initiated the registration of the property with the Land Registry. The registered owner was shown as Colney Heath Parish Council as custodian trustee for Colney Heath Village Hall.

We appreciate that some Councillors believed this to mean the Parish Council owned the property. (we learned later that the Parish Council had included the village hall in the asset register in the sum of £686,700).

In 2016 the managing trustees decided to clarify the ownership and advised the Parish Council of their intention to change the Custodian Trustee from the Parish Council to the Official Custodian for Charities, part of the Charities Commission (we later learned that the Parish Council removed the village hall from their asset register from 2016).

The change to the Official Custodian for Charities was completed in 2017 and the Land Registry noted the registered owner as The Official Custodian for Charities on behalf of The Trustees Of Colney Heath Village Hall.

### The contribution issue

The village hall's invoice for the contribution for 2015 was queried but eventually agreed for payment in April 2017. The managing trustees continued to issue invoices for the contribution viewing the payments by the Parish Council from 2002 to 2014 as evidence of an agreement (a contract established by conduct which we believed had legal force).

Parish Council had left the office in early 2017 as the space was too small for the additional staff they had employed, and moved the Parish Office to Alban Park.

As the space in the village hall was not occupied and the original purpose of access to the Clerk and other community services were not being provided, and the contribution for 2016 had not been paid, the managing trustees issued a "notice to quit" the office to the Parish Council in November 2017.

### The ownership issue again

At this point the Parish Council understood the Land Registry had recorded the Official Custodian for Charities as the registered owner of the village hall.

Parish Council instructed the solicitor who wrote to the trustees stating they were *"currently investigating the circumstances in which our client has been divested of the legal interest of the freehold of the whole building, as Custodian Trustee"* and requested we withdraw the eviction notice – which we did.

We responded *"We hope that you have been able to explain to your clients the Colney Heath Parish Council ("CHPC") that the Village Hall in Colney Heath is not owned by them and never has been. The Custodian Trustee is appointed by the Managing Trustees and the Village Hall Council ("VHC") have now appointed the Official Custodian for Charities, who are part of the Charity Commission, as the new Custodian Trustee."*

*The Custodian Trustee does not have executive authority or responsibility, they are merely there to hold the deeds on behalf of the title owners. We have explained this on a number of occasions and even written an article for the Parish Magazine on the subject. This is explained simply for anyone to*



In July 2017 the Parish Council stated that their internal auditor had noted that as the contribution arrangement was not a formal documented contract payment may be "ultra vires", the bill for 2016 was questioned, and they sought to reduce the contribution amount.

*read about it on Google. If the CHPC owned the property there would be no need for trustees".*

### To and fro without resolution

From 2018 to the end of 2020 various attempts were made to resolve the dispute with many letters exchanged. The Parish Council had moved to an office in Highfield Park for an annual rent of more than £4,000.

In early 2019 it seemed a resolution was in sight when heads of terms for the Parish Council to rent the office were agreed. The Parish Council deferred concluding until after the May 2019 Parish Council election. However, in late 2019 they withdrew from the idea of a lease and proposed a contribution that was much lower than the original agreement amounting to around £200 per annum. This was not accepted.

In April 2020 the Colney Heath Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) took over from the original unincorporated charity, and the ownership of the village hall was subsequently recorded in the name of the CIO at the Land Registry. This was simply changing the name of the owner – evidence (if it were still needed) that a Custodian Trustee does not own a charity's property.

### The legal claim for solicitor's fees

At the end of 2020 the Parish Council issued a pre-action claim letter. It seemed to the trustees that the Parish Council were wanting the trustees to pay for the fees charged by the Parish Council's solicitor to *"investigate the circumstances in which our client (ie the Parish Council) has been divested of the legal interest of the freehold of the whole building, as Custodian Trustee"*.

The managing trustees proposed mediation but this was declined.

In January 2021 the Parish Council made a formal claim in the County Court for the cost of their legal fees against the booking clerk and the managing trustees who had been in post in December 2017.

### The "office"

In the Spring of 2021 the trustees issued a section25 notice to terminate the Parish Council's use of the office space being used for storage.

In August the Parish Council proposed to lease the office and the trustees accepted this provided the rent the Parish Council had proposed was paid in advance, and the Parish Council paid the village hall's legal costs to prepare the lease.

### Resolution

At the Parish Council's Emergency meeting in September 2021 they decided to quit the office by the end of October. The trustees agreed to contribute a compensation amount to the Parish Council. They also agreed to withdraw their claim against the booking clerk and the trustees subject to them not claiming for their legal costs. The trustees agreed.

### Getting on with the job

The Parish Council seems to have assumed the Village Hall Trustees were benefitting in some way from their involvement with the Hall.

The Hall was originally built by unpaid volunteers from the Colney Heath village. The property is owned by a charity on behalf of the community. The trustees produce annual independently reviewed accounts. The trustees of the charity are unpaid volunteers responsible for ensuring that the charity remains viable in line with the Declaration of Trust created in 1936.

The charity charges all users to cover the cost of running the Hall and for funds to cover future repairs and improvements.

We have managed through the lockdown and emerged with a good number of regular hirers, several new to the hall (including Beavers and Cubs from the Scout Group). The hall is buzzing with life again and the trustees are planning various

Having no other option (other than to settle what some viewed as being similar to extortion) the trustees appointed their solicitor to defend the case. The solicitor and the barrister who reviewed the Parish Council's claim advised the trustees that the claim would not stand up in court.

improvement projects, both internally and externally.

Sadly Jujitsu who have used the hall for 33 years, and the Cyclists Touring Club who have used the hall for 43 years, have decided not to continue. They will be missed.

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

### Please join our AGM

OUR FIRST AGM WILL BE HELD ON

THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER AT 7.30PM

BY ZOOM <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89450626761>

Meeting ID: 894 5062 6761

### Newsletter

Our second newsletter was delivered in hard copy by 15 volunteers to all households in Colney Heath village in October. It was well received and feedback on the format and content has been very positive. Our next update to members is planned for late November. If you have any news, thought or ideas which affect the village or its residents please send them to [michaelredfern2006@gmail.com](mailto:michaelredfern2006@gmail.com)

### Membership

We have seen an increase in interest following the hardcopy newsletter to all households in the Area.

**We need as many residents as possible to join us, so PLEASE encourage all your neighbours and friends to join us.**

The more members we represent, the stronger our voice will be to influence the relevant bodies on the issues which concern us.

### Survey: the results and progress

In February and April, we asked residents what issues they were concerned about. Speeding on the High Street and Tollgate Road were noted as one of the "top 5" concerns by residents. This issue was also on the Parish Council's "radar" who have advised the Clerk she had "applied for two speed indicator devices on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021, application was confirmed as successful 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021. I have been contacted by HCC and am in the process of agreeing the locations so installation can commence.

We wrote to our County Councillor John Hale who responded on 11<sup>th</sup> October

**Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)** *These are the Smiley Face signs. Colney Heath Parish Council has asked for a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner for SIDs for both the High Street and Tollgate Road.. I am hopeful we can get them installed in the next 12 months.*

**20mph** *I am also aware of some support for 20mph along the High Street (and possibly Tollgate Road?). The county council has agreed a policy for the introduction of 20mph. The policy is too restrictive and I suspect may prevent this as a solution, but I have asked for the list of areas that are being considered and, if the High Street is not on the list, will ask for it to be added.*

**HGVs** *Another issue that has been mentioned to me, particularly about the High Street is HGVs breaching the restriction. HCC have recently carried out a survey of such use, they used cameras at each end of the High Street to record HGVs to see how long they took to transit the High Street i.e. did they take so long that they presumably had a legitimate reason to be there as they stopped to load or unload. I asked the relevant officer about this last week and he was still waiting on the data. He is also going to look at whether improvements can be made to the signage.*

*One obstacle is that because of some of the businesses located off the High Street it will be difficult to put any form of restriction in the High Street to prevent HGVs using the road.*

**Humps and Chicanes** *Personally I prefer the use of chicanes to humps for slowing traffic and would like to see them introduced on the High Street. Although improvements to the humps would also be welcome.*

*A speed and volume survey was carried out on Tollgate Road in 2020, this is where traffic speeds and volumes are measured continuously for a week. The results showed that the average speed was slightly over 30mph. This means the road will not qualify for funding for traffic calming measures. Hopefully the SID will cause drivers to slow down.*

*It has probably been some time since a survey was carried out along the High Street, so I will see if one can be arranged for 2022. It will not be possible to get permission and funding for traffic calming measures without a survey. Once I have the results we can look at possible traffic calming measures, unfortunately I have a number of other roads where residents are keen to see such measures, so there is a resource issue.*

### Roundhouse Farm

We understand that Taylor Wimpey will be developing the site and wish to engage with the Parish Council on the next steps. The Parish Council wish to include 4ColneyHeath residents' association in the discussion.

### Community Summer Party

Due to numbers being limited to 50 attendees we decided to cancel as this would not be a "community event".

### Community park

Collaborative arrangements with Herts County Council for the maintenance of the "pocket park" between St Marks Church and the A414 have yet to be concluded.



Steve Ross, Secretary of SRA writes :

The 'hot' topic for Smallford remains the prospect of having a quarry on our doorstep (that is Ellenbrook and Colney Heath Parish fields) for the next 40 years in addition to CEMEX with all the issues that brings.

The current position is that a Planning Inquiry sits on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to consider the appeal by Brett Aggregates against Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) decision to refuse permission for the quarry. There is a small team from Ellenbrook Residents' Association (ERA), Smallford Residents' Association (SRA) and Colney Heath Parish Council (CHPC) preparing for this enquiry.

Brett have at the same time submitted a second application (a new application) for a quarry on Ellenbrook Country Park. In Bretts' words, it deals with all the reasons that HCC refused the first. However, in our view it does not!

They appear to have designed this submission to coincide with the Inquiry with the intent of us having to deal with the Inquiry and also the new application and thus 'divide and conquer'. We needed to reply to the second application by the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 with our submissions to the Inquiry due on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021. You can see this is fairly cynical!

It now transpires that the officers of Hertfordshire County Council have wrongly published this second application for consultation as it has not been vetted and indeed all the information was not received. This after it took them four months to issue the formal letter of rejection after the first application was turned down in September 2020, thus giving more time for Brett to organise their next move – one wonders whether it's just Brett we are up against.

As the situation now stands, we expect the consultation period for the second application to re-start shortly and last until the end of November.



The green and pleasant land to the north of Smallford (bottom left) and Ellenbrook (bottom right)

## Currently we have spaces available

- ★ 15 hours FREE 2 year old funding
- ♥ 15 hours FREE 3 year old funding
- ★ 30 hours FREE 3 year old funding
- ♥ good hourly rate for extra hours or private places

[www.facebook.com/treasuretotspreschool](http://www.facebook.com/treasuretotspreschool)  
[treasuretotspreschool@gmail.com](mailto:treasuretotspreschool@gmail.com)

Call Sophie on 07594 489 465 for more information.



Treasure Tots Pre-School is for children aged 3 months to 5 years. They have government funded places for 3 & 4 year olds, as well as eligible 2 year olds.

Run by Sophie Yates and Deborah McHale, Treasure Tots is a local family pre-school, working in partnership with Colney Heath School to prepare children for their entrance into the school environment. Sophie and Deborah have good relationships with staff at local schools. The pre-school provides extended care for children who attend school nurseries. This enables them to gain maximum benefit from their entitlement of funded early education. Staff readily share information on children's learning with teachers and discuss any concerns they have. Parents speak highly of the staff. They say their children feel safe and secure and receive good education that prepares them well for starting school.

★ flexible hours to fit around school run times

- ♥ loving and caring environment
- ★ fun, creative, learning experiences



Sophie says: "Our aim is to provide children with a safe, secure, happy, healthy and caring environment. We provide a child centred approach to encourage the children to develop their creativity, individuality and self-confidence within a secure surrounding. Our children's learning and development is guided and supported by highly trained, qualified and experienced practitioners, who have been carefully selected for their ability to care for, and nurture each individual child".

Treasure Tots is based in Colney Heath Village Hall, where they have access to the garden as well as the large indoor hall. They have 2 sessions daily from Tuesday to Friday, from 9.15am to 12.15pm and then from 12.00 noon until 3.00pm, providing a lively fun start to children's education.

Make an appointment by calling Sophie on 07594 489 465.

This article is written by Derrick Crump who leads the 4Colney Heath residents' association Community Park working group

It's in the news, many TV programmes, discussed by royalty and part of our own day to day experience – the uncomfortable fact that we (and in particular our children and grandchildren) are faced with a climate and biodiversity emergency.

So perhaps we should all reflect whether as a community we are doing all we can to contribute to actions to minimise the harmful outcomes foreseen.

With respect to nature, we have first hand experience in Colney Heath of the conflicts of conservation and the increasing demands for more land for development and the impacts of intensive agriculture. The on-going transition of our village location through developments such as the Bullens Green housing, the unauthorised Coursers Road travellers' site, and the proposed Bowmans Cross new town, highlight the importance of protecting the remaining havens for nature that are also essential for our own well-being.



Wildflower meadow in the Community Park

Publicly owned land primarily managed to support nature locally are the Colney Heath Common Local Nature Reserve and the Colney Heath Community Park (there is also the Bullens Green woodland, planted as part of the Watling Chase Community Forest initiative that is largely located in Welwyn & Hatfield district and St Marks churchyard is part of the 'Living churchyards' scheme aimed at encouraging a wildlife rich habitat).

The Common has new adjacent development which resulted in unauthorised trenching across the Warren heathland in June 2020.

Major development is now threatened on its border (see draft Hertsmere Local Plan) which would further isolate wildlife and make the site more vulnerable and less able to recover from adverse periods of climate or other events. The Parish Council relinquished its responsibility for the Community Park in 2019 putting the site at risk of closure and for consideration for other uses.

Despite the considerable challenges, I have been encouraged by the efforts of our St Albans People & Wildlife Officer (Wilder St Albans) Officer who is working for St Albans District Council (on secondment from the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust). Heidi Carruthers has visited our Community Park, our churchyard and Common (as well as the Smallford Station and Alban Way Heritage project) and met volunteers and officers to discuss how we can protect and enhance these sites. Heidi has confirmed just how important these sites are on a regional scale. But they need appropriate management, investment and a supportive community.

Are you interested in establishing a 'friends' group within 4ColneyHeath Residents Association? This will involve volunteer tasks (e.g., cutting hawthorn on the common, litter picking, managing the Community Park), and campaigning (e.g. for more roadside trees, cattle grazing on the Warren).

Please contact me, Derrick Crump, or John Clemow – details below.

Let's make a Wilder Colney Heath an ambition for the future.

### Contacts :

Derrick Crump

e-mail [crumpcolney@aol.com](mailto:crumpcolney@aol.com)

John Clemow, Secretary

e-mail [4colneyheath@gmail.com](mailto:4colneyheath@gmail.com)

For further information on the Wilder St Albans project see; [Wilding | St Albans City and District Council](#)



## Improving the Environment around Smallford Station: A Significant Event

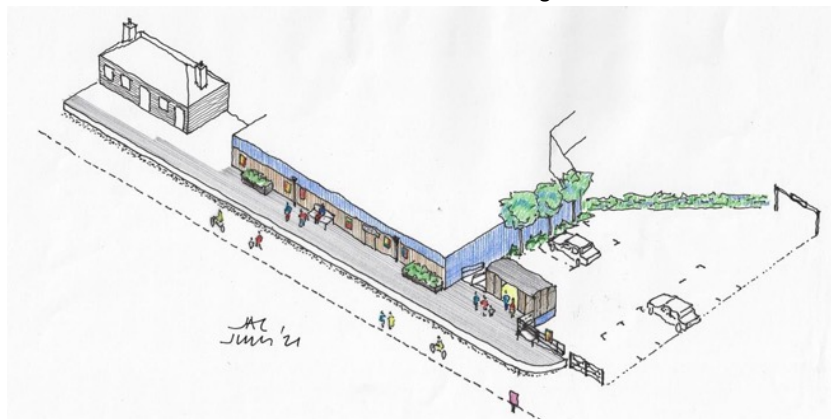
We've been planning this important collaborative community project for around three years now! Following very detailed preparation and advice, our Planning Application to SADC was heard and approved by their Planning Committee South on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021. However, the approval was conditional on a number of detailed points.

As well as our own Project Planning Team, we've been really lucky to have several important people 'on board' to support us. Frances Leonard is a St Albans District Councillor who has been a member of our Society for several years: She has been enthusiastically 'pushing our Project forward' and generously met the full cost of our Planning Application. John Clemow is a retired Architect and David Lane a very successful Town Planner.

Both have generously provided their services for free and, with their encouragement and support, our formal Planning Application to SADC was successful.

SADC appointed Tom Hardy, Estate Services Manager, as our Liaison Officer and one of his team, Steve Dibben, Infrastructure Manager, is also involved.

Although we now have planning permission, we've not been able to proceed on improving the platform. We've yet to agree the Conditions set in the Planning Agreement with SADC. Before we can install the various items of 'furniture', SADC, led by Tom Hardy and his team, will be undertaking a range of improvement works - including resurfacing the platform making it safe and sound for the public to use, and building the platform extension providing part of the entrance to the goods van which will hold our exhibition.



## 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'. We've had the designs enlarged and printed and were able to display them at our 'Heritage Open Day' Exhibition on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September – they made quite an impact!



Horticulture Students will be working on two raised flower beds that will sit on the platform and the embankment that runs along the car park. Trowel Trades students will be replacing old brickwork.



## Refurbishing our Railway Goods Van Body

Currently at Oaklands College Smallford Campus it will be moved to the station and will contain a permanent exhibition which will be open to the public



When we received it

The goods van body now sits on a large steel frame has been built and welded to the underbody. This strengthens the structure so it will remain stable when moved.

The next steps –

- It has to be re-sited at Oaklands College because of their development plans.
- We'll be fitting a roof – constructed from plywood and covered with rubberised sheeting.



May 2021



October 2021

## Project Costs and Fundraising

Our estimated total of the Projects described above is £12,000! To date, we have raised, or have set aside from our own funds, around £7,000; this includes a grant of £1,000 – we are very grateful to the Colney Heath Parish Council for this award.

We have a Just Giving page to raise a further £5,000, and you can access this via the following link –

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ssawhs-fundraiser> – where you'll also find more details of the Projects.

Given the current price inflation of building materials (including wood) our projected costs may, of course, turn out to be an underestimate.

If you:

- would like more details of **these** projects
- would like to be actively involved (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....
- would like to make a donation towards the costs of these projects....

Please contact us via [info@smallford.org](mailto:info@smallford.org)

Jeff Lewis: Chair: Smallford Station & Alban Way Heritage Society  
[info@smallford.org](mailto:info@smallford.org)



contacts  
Joanna 01727 828003 or  
Debbie 01727 824185 or  
email [colneyheathwi@gmail.com](mailto:colneyheathwi@gmail.com)

Meet new people and make friends while getting involved in your community. Discover different skills and activities, join the book club, sewing club and drama group, go on outings or just enjoy our monthly meeting with interesting and entertaining speakers.

We meet in the Colney Heath village hall on the second Thursday of the month at 7.45 pm. Each meeting includes a speaker, learning a new skill or being entertained and yes, there is always cake to enjoy with our tea or coffee and sometimes wine!

Most recently we enjoyed a summer event after laying a memorial plaque in the Colney Heath Community Park and served soup at the Smallford Station and Alban Way Heritage Society Open Day.

We are a friendly bunch with a warm welcome for new members and if you would like to find out more please email [colneyheathwi@gmail.com](mailto:colneyheathwi@gmail.com) You can also find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/colneyheathwi](http://www.facebook.com/colneyheathwi)





Elizabeth writes

At long last, Colney Heath Theatre Club is off to London. We have tickets booked for *The Drifters Girl* at The Garrick Theatre on 14<sup>th</sup> November. After such a long break it was fabulous to see how enthusiastic the take-up for tickets has been. All forty tickets were snapped up.



We have decided not to book for the pantomime at The London Palladium this year; however, we will be booking for a show in the new year within the next few weeks for March 2022.

Should you wish to receive emails about future shows please email [colneyheaththeatreclub@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:colneyheaththeatreclub@yahoo.co.uk).

Colney Heath Theatre Club has been established for fifteen years and is a not-for-profit association. It allows travel to London shows in a safe and comfortable environment.

## TWINNING ASSOCIATION



The Colney Heath Boissy Twinning Association is a local organisation providing opportunities to meet and socialise in both the local community of Colney Heath and the community of Boissy in France (optional). Membership is not required to enjoy our social events, which are not priced to be fundraisers



### Next event

Christmas Event – an evening with Caribbean street food and disco). Tickets £25 per head (includes welcome drink), non-members welcome.

4 December in the Colney Heath Village Hall. Contact [lewislesley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lewislesley@hotmail.co.uk)

### October Trip to Boissy

Six members will be travelling to Boissy on an unofficial Twinning visit. Unlike previous years we will not be travelling by coach and ferry. Instead we will take the Eurostar train to Paris, and then a train from Paris to Egly, a village near Boissy. We hope that this will considerably reduce the travelling time by avoiding the Friday rush hour traffic around Paris!

## EARLIER THIS YEAR

### Annual Summer Social

On a beautiful hot Sunday in July (if not a tad too hot!), 29 members and friends finally got together for a social in the garden of our chair for a time of catching up, great company and fine food.



### Annual autumn knees up : Cocktails and Mocktails

Kicking off at 8pm on Saturday 16th October in the village hall members and guests tried out the cocktail and recipes designed from the variety of bottles from the booze cabinets of three committee members. Favourites included the “Galvanised Nail” (vodka, cointreau and lime juice), the Tom Collins (gin, lemon juice, sugar syrup and soda water) and the Harvey Wallbanger (vodka, galleano, and orange juice). The mocktail of choice was the “Pina Coolarder” (juices of orange, pineapple and lime, with mint and ginger ale). To steady the hand was a wide range of buffet finger foods, and to test the brain a quiz loosely based on cocktails.



Trying to fathom the quiz



Now, which one is this?



A prize for Judy, quiz winner

The Committee has now recommenced meeting in person. We are not sorry to see the back of Zoom - other than it restricting the length of meetings to 45 minutes!!! Whilst events have been curtailed somewhat this year, we are looking forward to a full programme in 2022.



## IRIS' ART GROUP



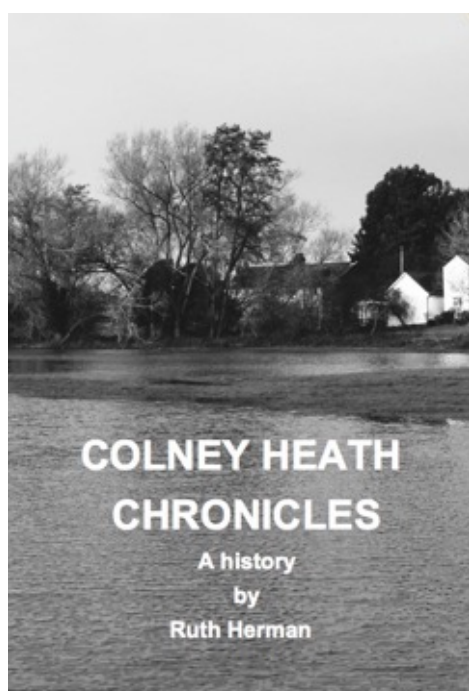
We are all amateur artists of varying ability. Beginners are welcome, and will quickly improve with the help and support of members of the group. We have list of what you really need to started so check before you buy anything.

Since June we have been meeting again in the Studio at the Village Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> June on the first and third Wednesday in every month for two hours starting at 10am.

With the restrictions in place we “travel” through our pictures to the seaside and magical places.

It costs just £3 per session and you only pay the sessions that you would like to join contact [irisbond8@gmail.com](mailto:irisbond8@gmail.com)





**LAST CHANCE  
ONLY 10 COPIES LEFT**

Published by the Colney Heath and District History Society the second and last print run of Volume 1 of the **COLNEY HEATH CHRONICLES** has **ALMOST SOLD OUT.**

Priced at £7.50 for local delivery or collection at the village shop. P&P is £2 for orders from further away addresses.

To order a book or join the Society (membership is free) contact [jackclemow@gmail.com](mailto:jackclemow@gmail.com) or call 07803 313 525

Proceeds from the book are being donated to a charity supporting people with Parkinson's.

Ruth Herman writes :

Our first chronicle took the village from the Romans and covered nearly 2000 years (which is very fast within 80 pages). The village and I have slowed down for the next one but it's still full of quirky facts and the strange things our predecessors got up to. So there is living memory. I've interviewed some of the oldest residents of the village and heard the merry japes they got up to. There are stories about heroes and failures. It's a fascinating mix which goes from dead people to poor people with a detour for straw hats for horses. There's the spy who thought he was in Cambridge and the Luftwaffe who thought they were in Reading.

What else is there to look forward to? I am taking a closer look at the school and I have exclusive access to the diaries of the schoolteachers of yester year. They had to battle against sickness, absenteeism and in the early days the schoolmistresses and schoolmasters knew hardly any more than their pupils.

And there is so much more to record about the village. I am still amazed at how much I keep finding. It won't be too long now before Volume II is published. So keep an eye out for the next instalment

The following is the text of a letter signed by nearly 300 people that being sent to Members of Parliament

### THE COLNEY HEATH PRECEDENT

We, the residents of Colney Heath village, request you urgently urge Ministers to ensure designated Greenbelt land is protected from the requirement for a 5 year supply of land, and housing shortage *per se*, which is resulting in the damaging exploitation by developers of inappropriate and unsustainable locations on greenfield sites within designated Greenbelt land

- a. by making the necessary changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance, and
- b. to include this protection in legislation so that “very special circumstances” under the NPPF cannot be misinterpreted and it is absolutely clear that greenfield and farmed land in the Greenbelt is protected.

If you agree read no further. If you doubt the reason for our request please make the time to read on.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A Planning Inquiry was held in May this year into the appeal by the landowner and developer as consent was refused by the Local Authority for 100 houses on Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath

**on a greenfield farmland site in the designated Metropolitan Greenbelt which had never before been built on in any way.**

The developer’s case was principally that the lack of a 5 year supply of land, and the shortage of housing, were “very special circumstances” under the NPPF.

The Planning Inspector for the Inquiry considered that this had greater weight than the harm to the Greenbelt, and disregarded objections from the local authority and more than 200 objections from residents, and disregarded Ministers’ statements, quoted in section 4 below, regarding the proper and democratic process for considering development in the Greenbelt.

**Being in the lowest category of the Settlement Hierarchy, Colney Heath would never be included for development in a Local Plan.**

### ABOUT COLNEY HEATH

Colney Heath is a village in Hertfordshire in the metropolitan Greenbelt. It is not designated for development in the Local Plan and never would be. The village has around 700 properties and 1,220 registered electors. We have a church, a village hall, a pub, a coffee and cake café, a small shop/post office, a takeaway and a football club. We have strong community with a number of organizations, local societies and clubs. We are surrounded by farmland and woods with the Common being a designated nature reserve in the heart of the village.

Our village has a small junior school with one class per year group, that is usually full and already local families have struggled to obtain a place for their child. Herts County Council data shows that in the last 2 years the school had 45 applications for 30 places. This primary clearly cannot absorb the impacts of the additional development. Secondary schools are distant and places are subject to appeals every year. Some of our children have journeys of over an hour to the school places offered in surrounding areas. There are no health services in the village. There is no access to safe cycling routes out of the village. With very limited local facilities and very limited public transport, residents are totally reliant on the motor car for access to employment, schools, shopping etc.

The Inspector formed the opinion that bus services were adequate (they are clearly not) and the national cycling route (2 miles away) could be used for travel to work. A Planning Inquiry was held in March this year into the proposed housing development on “Smallford Works”. That location is much closer to more frequent bus services to better destinations and is adjacent to the local national cycle route. The Inspector for the “Smallford Works” Inquiry deemed the bus services were inadequate and the cycle route useful for leisure purposes only.

**Colney Heath is not a sustainable location for development beyond very limited infill.**

### COLNEY HEATH IS “VERY SPECIAL”

Being in the lowest category of the “settlement hierarchy”, Counsel for the District Council advised the Planning Inquiry that our village “would never be included in a Local Plan”.

On hearing the Inspector’s decision Counsel for the developer’s appeal wrote a blog entitled “What is so very special about Colney Heath?” which includes “*There was no allocation. No proposed allocation. No element of previously developed land. No enabling development. Nothing, really.*

*No. This one’s a pure Green Belt case. An open, green field on the edge of a village. And the circumstances which tipped the scales and won the day: **housing need.** Pure and simple.”*

**We understand from the CPRE that the Inspector’s decision for Colney Heath is already being cited as a precedent in planning applications.**



### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The appeal decision by the Inspector disregards statements by Ministers which we quote as follows :

In a letter to Members of Parliament for English Constituencies dated the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Brandon Lewis, the then Housing and Planning Minister stated *"The framework makes it clear that inappropriate development may be allowed only where very special circumstances exist and that Green Belt boundaries should be adjusted only in exceptional circumstances, through the Local Plan process and with support of local people. We have been repeatedly clear that demand for housing alone will not change Green Belt boundaries."*

In a letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Brandon Lewis stated *"The Government is committed to maintaining strong protections for Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that inappropriate development should only be allowed where very special circumstances exist and that Green Belt boundaries adjusted only in exceptional circumstances, through the Local Plan process"*.

A letter to the RT Hon Theresa Villiers from the Rt Hon Sajid Javid, the then Secretary of State, on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016 said

*"It has never been the case that an area of Green Belt can never be altered, but any such changes are locally-led and can be made only in exceptional circumstances by means of the Local Plan process, following consultation and independent examination by a planning inspector to ensure that the plan is sound. We designed the Framework to be locally interpreted and applied, so we do not define exceptional circumstances. However, the supporting guidance reminds local authorities that, in planning to meet local housing needs, they must have regard to the Framework's policies on the protection of areas such as Green Belt, which indicates that development should be restricted and which may restrain the ability of an authority to meet its need"*.

In a letter of 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to the Rt Hon Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State said *"Local authorities then need to determine whether there are environmental designations or other physical or policy constraints (such as Green Belt) which prevent them meeting their housing need"*.

This is again emphasized in a letter from the Secretary of State on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to Crispin Blunt MP. There is also the stricture to

*"examine all other reasonable options for meeting their development needs, before concluding that any Green Belt land has to be released"*.

In a letter from the current Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, to the Rt Hon Theresa May dated the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 states.

*"A local authority can alter the boundary of Green Belt land only in exceptional circumstances and where it can demonstrate that it has fully examined all other reasonable options for meeting its development need".* Further *"The Framework also makes clear that most new building is inappropriate in the Green Belt and should be refused planning permission unless there are very special circumstances. Some examples of these circumstances are listed in the Framework, such as buildings for agriculture, or limited infilling in villages"*.

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We understand these statements mean changes to the Green Belt will be locally led. This was not the case in the Planning Inquiry for Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath. Local people and the Councillors elected by them were against the application. We are outraged that the Planning Inspectorate, an unelected body, appointed an independent Inspector who does not live locally, has no vested interest in local planning matters, and who does not pay council tax in the area, has decided what is best for us and over the heads of the Council we have elected, and contrary to Ministers' statements.

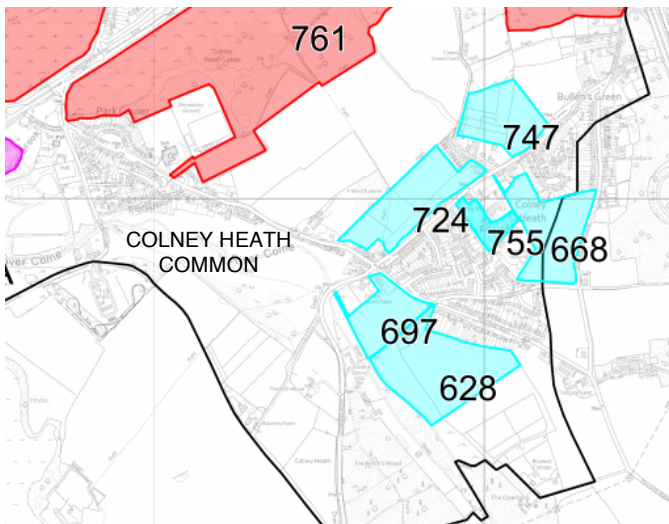
The majority of residents' objections to the planning application were about the lack of school places, the lack of bus services, traffic congestion, and flooding adjacent to the development site. These were not just simple "NIMBY" reactions.

We would not have objected to some local "infilling" with genuinely affordable houses but now, with the addition of 100 houses, we say NO MORE!



### THE REAL AND PRESENT DANGER

Developers and other parties have put forward parcels of farmland and fields surrounding our village in response to St Albans District Council's "call for sites" for the updating of the Council's Local Plan. These parcels comprise between 25 and 150 houses totaling more than 500 dwellings (in addition to the 100 that now have planning permission) and excluding the "housing-led mixed use."



The village comprises two parts, the original settlement to the north of the Common and subsequent development to the East of the Common.

The blue plots show farmland and fields offered for housing, the orange for housing-led mixed use.

Plot 668 has been granted consent by the Inspector of the Inquiry in July for 100 houses.

Plot 761 is housing-led mixed use, number of houses not given

These land owners and developers are unlikely to wait for St Albans District Council to update their Local Plan. They may be emboldened by the precedent of the Inspector's decision and appeal when their planning application is refused by the District Council. Our village would be swamped by piecemeal developments that individually would not justify the addition of the necessary supporting infrastructure. New and existing residents would be harmed, and the village environment destroyed.

### THIS IS YOUR CONCERN

The appeal decision for Colney Heath is already being cited as a precedent in planning applications. It is likely to be repeated leading to many communities sharing our outrage.

Like us, many constituents who value the environment fear that the government is handing over housing policy to the house builders who are primarily interested in building "executive housing" on greenfield sites. These developments contribute little to the infrastructure and social costs needed to support this policy. The concern is that such an approach means the Greenbelt will be sacrificed to build unaffordable housing.

At the 2021 Conservative Party Conference in his keynote speech the Prime Minister stated  
*"you can also see how much room there is  
to build the homes that young families need in this  
country  
not on green fields  
not just jammed in the south east  
but beautiful homes on brownfield sites  
in places where homes make sense"*

We ask you to do your utmost to ensure this aim is realised and it is this applied to housebuilding for all citizens.