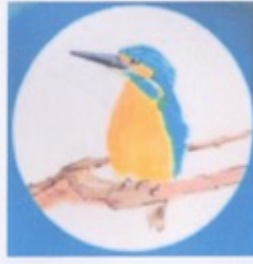


PARISH E-NEWS



News and updates from
organisations in the Colney Heath
Parish community including

Colney Heath village, Highfield,
Hill End, Oaklands, Roestock,
Smallford, Sleapshyde, and
Tyttenhanger

To join the circulation list – its free – email jackclemow@gmail.com

ISSUE 8 : JANUARY 2021

The quarterly newsletter for friends and residents



The Longabout signalised crossing – at Long Last!

WELCOME

In this 8th edition of our Parish E-News you will see news from, and information about, a number of sources received for inclusion in this issue.

Clicking this link <https://www.colneyheathvillagehall.com/parish-e-news.html> will take you to the website page including this newsletter and previous issues.

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

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

please e-mail

jackclemow@gmail.com or michaelredfern2006@gmail.com

Editors and Trustees of CH Village Hall

page

3	Editorial
5	The Longabout
6	May the Book be with You
7	Covid Changes
11	Covid comment
13	St Mark's Church
15	OWL (on line watch link)
16	Herts Rural Support Networks
17	Beavers, Cubs and Scouts
18	Parish Council Matters
21	Colney Heath Community Park
22	Smallford Station and Alban Way Heritage Society
25	Colney Heath Village Hall
26	Colney Heath WI
27	Twinning Association (CBTA)
28	Smallford Residents Association
29	4ColneyHeath Residents Association
30	Roundhouse Farm development
31	Colney Heath School PTA
32	A Near Miss
33	Trees
34	Winter scenes
35	Rainbow
36	Iris' Art Group

EDITORIAL

May 2021 live up to all the good wishes for Happy New Year expressed as 2020 came to an end.

While nationally the 100,000+ deaths from Covid is solemn news, we have some good news in our area and community – and some problems too.

We are delighted to welcome Mike Redfern as co-editor of this newsletter. Community organizations making contributions to this edition will have been in contact with Mike. Major disruptions bring changes to the way we work, socialize and think about our way of life. The big freeze in 1963 and the financial crash in 2008 brought unexpected changes – what will our post-pandemic world look like? Mike has written the article on **Covid Changes** about some of the changes and how some local people have responded.

Our cover picture features **The Longabout**, overdue but the best news to end a difficult year. An 18th C map shows roads from the High Street in Colney Heath to “Small Foot” (now Smallford) and another to Hill End via Tyttenhanger. From Roestock Lane, roads connected to Sleapshyde (today this is the lane via Cherry Green Trees) and another to Ellenbrook. These routes are still evident if one looks carefully at an aerial photograph.

The construction of the North Orbital A414 divided the area of the current Parish leaving only one connection - the High Street via the Longabout on the A414. The configuration of the longabout was so dangerous, and long delays at the rush hours, meant many residents in Colney Heath refused to use it. There were many accidents and several deaths. The Longabout was a barrier, physically and socially.

Finally, after many years of campaigning by our County Councillor John Hale, and our District and Parish Councillors, the WI and other local organisations, and many individual residents, the work finally started on the traffic light controlled exit from the village onto, and across, the Longabout. After various delays the junction opened 17 weeks later on 15th December. It now provides a controlled, and we hope a safe, access onto the A414 and a crossing to the St Albans side of what was a deadly division between the communities on either side.

This connection has greater significance than may appear at first sight.

Lockdown has a few advantages, one being time for the Colney Heath and District History Society to produce the first volume of Ruth Herman’s entertaining history of Colney Heath which will be published in February.

We enter 2021 with lockdown again, fearful at the threat to our health from a more aggressive version of Covid-19 and the economic consequences combined with the new arrangements with the EU. Meanwhile the number of cases, hospitalization and deaths have risen sharply.

St Mark’s Church offers readers a prayer for ourselves, our families and our community.

OWL (Online Watch Link) is sending steady stream of warnings about scams as criminals are exploiting the fears and uncertainties.

The vaccine offers hope. How we emerge from lockdown and the lesser restrictions that will follow as the population is progressively vaccinated is not yet clear as noted in **Covid opinion**.

Meanwhile, communities across Hertfordshire continue to develop to provide support through the **Rural Support Networks**.

The troubles between the Parish Council and the **Scouts** seem to have some parallels with Brexit. Both started in 2016, the date of the Brexit referendum and the expiry of the Scouts lease on the land where they had built their HQ in Roestock Park. A quick agreement was anticipated by the UK, and by the Scouts, but this was not to be. Over the last 4 years there have been many twists and turns – with the Scouts being evicted in December 2019. Despite the warm words of promise in February 2020, one year has passed and the Scouts remain homeless. The Government “got Brexit done” in 12 months from the Withdrawal Agreement by Christmas last year. But it seems that a solution for the Scouts may now be in sight.

In **Parish Council Matters** the slow progress in 2020 on resolving the “Roestock Hut” is set out month by month along with updates on Gloucester Park and Horseshoe Field. Since the Parish Council decided to no longer maintain the Colney Heath **Community Park**, this is now closed until a solution can be found.

Some community organizations have been able to keep active with “projects” like the **Smallford Station and Alban Way Heritage Society**, or with their community service such as the **Colney Heath Village Hall**. The activities of other more socially orientated groups have been severely curtailed but have “kept soldiering on” - for example the **Colney Heath WI** and the **Twinning Association** (some may find the picture on page 27 boring).

One such organization is the **Colney Heath Theatre Club**. For the past thirteen years, Colney Heath Theatre Club has been running trips to London’s West End to enjoy a wide range of musical theatre from classics such as Les Miserables to the latest theatrical releases and, of course, the annual pantomime. *“After a tremendously busy 2019, we sadly drew a blank in 2020, with almost all shows cancelled due to theatre closures. Quite when we will resume our trips is unknown at present, safety being our first consideration. Only when we can ensure a safe, comfortable and convenient way to enjoy an evening in the West End will we be reviewing our position.”*

However, If you would like to receive information on theatre trips as they recommence then please either email colneyheaththeatreclub@yahoo.co.uk or telephone/text 07870701118

The **Smallford Residents Association** has been active is opposing development of Ellenbrook Fields in their area and now face the revival of an application 1,100 houses on land adjacent to the quarry. The recently formed Residents Association **4ColneyHeath** with a growing membership is gearing up with various activities planned this year. This group has opposed the proposed development of up to 100 dwellings the **Roundhouse Farm field** on Bullens Green Lane which will go to an appeal hearing starting on 27th April.

The pressure on school places was mentioned in the many objections raised by many residents. It is a pleasure to welcome to the first entry from the **Colney Heath School PTA**.

.....
The UK is due to host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November. This will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The UK is seldom credited with its green agenda but it was the first G7 country to legislate the commitment to achieve net carbon zero by 2050. Too little, too late some would say. The recent flooding of the Heath mentioned in **A Near Miss** may be evidence of the impending effects of climate change.

The impact of what we individually do, and change, is significant. Use of plastic shopping bags has reduced by 95% in England (with some encouragement). Some actions “export” the negative impacts to other countries who may be less concerned than us.

Planting **Trees** is a local initiative which most of us could be involved in. With no hidden negative impacts, planting the right type of trees makes a vital contribution to a cleaner environment.

In **Winter Scenes** are examples of some super pictures of Christmas decorations, the flooding of the Heath, and the subsequent snow, by local photographers many of whom have been posted on Colney Heath Village Facebook. The beautiful photograph featured in **Rainbow** is underpinned by a poignant story.

Meanwhile **Iris’ Art Group** continues to meet virtually every week, drawing and painting. Some of the artists pictures will be included in the first volume of the history of Colney Heath that will be published shortly by the Colney Heath and District History Society.

VILLAGE SHOP AND POST OFFICE

Manish and Jayshee (true key workers and local heroes) have kept the shop and post office open, hours at the end of Janaury are as follows :

	Monday to Saturday	Sunday
shop	8.30 am – 5.00 pm	8.30 am – 3.00 pm
Post office	9.00 am – 2.00 pm	Closed

Currently footfall is around 150 people per day and they wish to limit their exposure to the Covid infection which is still high in the area. Some people enter the shop without a mask. They hope to gradually increase the opening hours as conditions improve.

Manish did not want me to mention he had been clearing the drains in the road to avoid the flooding outside the shop in case Highways rely on his initiative in future.

COMMENTS WELCOME!

There has been some discussion on the “one page document” layout versus “newspaper column” style when read digitally. There are pros and cons. With a one page layout you read progressively down the page. The newspaper column style means scrolling down and then back to the top to scroll down again. The newspaper style means the narrower column text is larger so more easily read on mobile phone screens. Readers views would be helpful.

As always, we would appreciate readers feedback on our newsletter – ideas, news items, stories, comments, and criticism are welcome.

I get comments that our news is more about the south side of the A414. Organisations and individual readers on our circulation list across all areas of the Parish are invited to contribute to our E-News. So, if you have news or views about your area please contact me or Mike.

THE LONGABOUT

The “problem” of the Longabout on the A414 has deep roots. Originally planned as the “North Orbital” road around London the section between Watford and Hatfield was built in the 1930’s. In the 1960’s it was realised that it would not cope with the forecasted volume of east-west traffic and the M25 route was decided on.

The opening of the last stretch of the M25 on 29th October 1986 initially relieved traffic flows on the A414. On the opening day the Parish Council Clerk, Dudley Wood, wrote *“to the Bell roundabout, up the London Colney bypass and across the north London Colney roundabout, traffic suddenly removed, seemed like the leisurely manoeuvres of a few early Sunday morning vehicles”*. However, the traffic returned and by 2020 the A414 is (apparently) the busiest non-motorway road in Britain. To brave the exit from Colney Heath, and the access from Smallford and Sleapshyde via Station Road, meant taking your life in your hands, literally.

The campaign to solve the problem has been protracted and frustrating. Many residents and Councillors from the Parish, District and County Councils have agitated, complained and lobbied to solve the problem.

In the Spring of 1997 the Chronicle reported on a public meeting at the school – suggestions included the creation of an underpass or flyover at the junction with longabout, indicating the kind of measures people thought necessary to make the crossing safely.

Reports from various Chairs of the Parish Council over the years articulate the barriers put up by the authorities.

Chronicle Spring 1997 Derrick Crump wrote County Officials reviewed the longabout and identified the exits from Smallford lane and the High Street as being of concern. A commitment was made to seek funding for a feasibility study to install traffic lights.

Chronicle Winter 2006 Margaret Corley wrote *Unfortunately the major concern has always been the Longabout which not only divides the Parish but is a barrier socially and physically.*

Chronicle Summer 2012 Derrick Crump wrote *But talking of matters rumbling on, the lack of progress with modification to the A414 longabout (has) been a source of continuing frustration.*

Chronicle Winter 2013 Chris Brazier wrote *We have campaigned for alterations to the Longabout for many years it was finally agreed at a meeting with Highways that a budget of £60k will be spent on the design and the installation of traffic lights. The first phase of the project was scheduled to start on 12th November but due to an objection by the police, work will not start this year.*

Chronicle Spring 2014 Margaret Nash wrote (County Councillor Dreda Gordon) *confirmed that a trial of a new design for the longabout on the A414 will go ahead in 2014/15.*

Chronicle Winter 2014 Chris Brazier wrote *...the police prevented the longabout trial taking place in September but have now promised it will take place in March 2015. To exit the side roads onto the A414 can take up to 20 minutes and the A414 is like a race track, so safety measures have to be put in place.*

Chronicle Summer 2015 Kevin Barnes wrote *We finally saw the signal trial on the A414 Longabout take place, many thanks to Cllr Brazier and Cllr Gordon for keeping the pressure on Highways.*

As the Chronicle ceased in 2015 the narrative continues based on selected minutes from the Parish Council meetings.

In November 2016 Cllr Gordon reported she had met with HCC officers...the technical report on the traffic lights trial was complete and they would publish an abridged version for the public.

In the Spring of 2017 there was a public meeting in the JMI school attended by HCC Highways officers. The petition would be debated by HCC. April 2018, following the traffic light trial report publication for the A414 Longabout Margaret Nash organised the petition that has reached the level for a debate at County Hall. In October 2019 it was confirmed the work to install traffic lights was in the financial plan, potentially to be done at Easter 2020.

Well, as we know, things went a bit awry in March 2020 with the lockdown. The opportunity to do the work during lockdown when the A414 was virtually free of traffic was missed – Herts Highways probably had other priorities. Finally, work started in August but was painfully slow but was eventually completed 17 weeks later on 15th December.



The longabout is now no longer the social or physical barrier dividing the parish but provides a good gateway to the access to, and exit from, Colney Heath village.

Well, I trust you are all excited by the prospect of the publication of the **Colney Heath Chronicles**, new history of Colney Heath.

It is the first venture of the new Colney Heath & District History Society and it will give us a sense of how the village has developed since the Romans. The presses are rolling and the work will soon be with you.

As the fond author I may be biased but I have been told it's a jolly good read. Although it is, I hope, entertaining it is also informative. I have done my research and I have not invented anything although I have speculated on some tantalising possibilities. In brief I hope readers will find my view of history is a million miles from the dull stuff we were told about in our first history lessons.

So what will you find in the book?

You will find stories about people with all the quirky things that people do. You might even call it action packed, with hounds chasing a stag closely followed by more horses in a well-publicised race across the heath. You might be shocked by the illegal and brutal bare knuckle boxing and you will definitely be intrigued by a King and a Queen and their messy divorce. And of course, no story about a heath would be complete without a dashing highwayman. From cattle rustlers to long running disputes over land ownership the book contains nearly two thousand years of goings on in the village and its surrounding countryside.

As you can see from the above the book is stuffed to overflowing with good stories. In fact it is so packed that we decided that there should be a second volume which will take us from the middle of the nineteenth century to what it is today.

So if you haven't already ordered your copy contact jackclemow@gmail.com or call 07803 313 525 and be among the first to get it.

Dr Ruth Herman
Committee member, Colney Heath and District History Society.

A couple of excerpts to whet the appetite



From Chapter 5 "Trouble on the Heath"

One of the earliest examples of trouble on the Heath foretold the kind of lawlessness which we will look at in greater depth later. Nothing is sacred to the determined rioter or thief and the thirteenth century saw some pretty bad behaviour. It is true to say that all raiders who cross borders to rustle cattle are suspected of being violent but the unfortunate residents of Colney Heath found themselves being invaded by persons accustomed to "robbery and violence". Horrifyingly they came from that den of iniquity Dunstable. These scoundrels from Bedfordshire helped themselves to twelve oxen owned by farmers who grazed their livestock on the Heath.

and from Chapter 7 "Here comes the King" (Henty VIII)

Then the party moved to Tyttenhanger on 27th June. Having taken over the house the King instructed Wolsey to get himself to the Abbey in St Albans partly so that Wolsey could be looked after by the King's doctors (but not too close to his royal person) and equally importantly he could be in constant communication about the annulment. Henry was not a great house guest. In fact tourist websites are likely to have blacklisted him. Not only did he kick the resident Abbot out to make room for his entourage he set about remodelling the building to his own specification.

He told his builder to knock a hole through in one wall so that it was more convenient for him to participate in the daily celebration of the Mass. Then he was so "much delighted with the Abbot's pleasant house, and the air of Tyttenhanger", that he decided to prolong his visit.

COVID CHANGES

In writing this piece, I was immediately struck by the number and scale of changes to our lives that have been brought about by the coronavirus and the measures taken by the government to get on top of the pandemic. For example, the acceptance of wearing masks in buildings, especially in retail outlets, has become second nature, although social distancing in supermarkets requires improvement.

Many of us are walking more than previously, often with dogs which have been added to the household. National ownership of dogs has increased by more than 6% in 2020, and this is clearly seen in the number of dogs exercising every day on the Heath. We are extremely fortunate in the village that we live so close to a large open space which is available for us all to use. In addition to the Heath there are many footpaths around the fields and lakes that surround us.

Online shopping has become the norm for many households, so much so that it's difficult to get a delivery slot from many supermarkets! I believe that this is a permanent change which will continue long into the future. Schools and universities are closed for the next few weeks, putting pressure on parents to cope with managing their jobs, home schooling and entertaining bored kids.

Our ability to get entertainment is massively restricted, with no live sporting events available and no theatres and cinemas to visit. We have only our televisions, better than nothing, but might we turn into a nation of couch potatoes?

Going to pubs and restaurants has been severely curtailed. In the latest set of restrictions all these outlets have been instructed to close, leaving our village with no outlet for socialising other than electronically. Clubs and societies are unable to meet, other than by the less-than-ideal online facilities, reducing further to our ability to meet face to face with friends. I sincerely hope that our village retains its pub as a focal point of our social lives, and its shops to supply our everyday needs. There is enormous value in the gardens which so many of us in the village have, and there has been a huge increase in gardening. The UK bought 322 million more plants in 2020 than in 2019, and seed firms have reported huge increases in sales. Our gardens are blooming.

Perhaps the most dramatic effect of the pandemic has been the need of many people to change their employment practices by working from home. There is increased demand for homes in villages and away from cities as there is a much reduced need to be physically close to the place of work. This is likely to put pressure on housing development in the village – as seen in the proposed Roundhouse Farm development. It may also inflate the cost of housing as people with fat wallets move out of London. Home improvements such as house extensions are set to increase, offering opportunities for local builders and tradespeople.

Local people have set up new businesses, we feature a few examples that provide welcome nurture.

Rudi's Chilli Jams

One excellent example of the application of a positive outlook is the story of Darren Chason. Darren has had a history of entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry and he has put this to excellent use to start an entirely new business during the pandemic. Having sold his interest in two pub/restaurants, he was working as a freelance chef when the pandemic hit the UK. He quickly realised that this was an area of work that was unreliable in the current circumstances and set up a new business which utilised his skills and experience....and Rudi's Chilli Jams was born. The business is named after Darren's cockapoo! Darren has started the business without financial support from banks or the government, and has relied on his own resources. His family helped him get set up on Facebook and Instagram. He has had help and assistance from the St Albans Business Development team, led by Denise Parsons.

Darren produces a great range of artisan savoury jams, chutneys and pickles. All Rudi's Homemade products are vegan and gluten free, and are completely free from artificial flavourings and colourings. I can say from personal experience that they are absolutely delicious. The best place to see and buy Rudi's Chilli Jams is at the Inside Out pop up market every Friday in St Albans. The market is situated on High Street and George Street. You can also buy online by emailing darrenchillijam@gmail.com or through Instagram at @rudichillijam

Darren's objective is to grow the business whilst keeping it local. His future target outlets are specialist cheese shops, farm shops and garden centres.



Mama Cynth's

I spoke a few days ago to a lovely lady, Sonia McDonnell, who told me all about Mama Cynth's Yard Food. Having run a Jamaican cakes and chutneys business for several years Sonia wanted to do something different. Her late mother – Mama Nelson - and sister Cynth were both experts in Jamaican cuisine and in March last year Sonia created Mama Cynth's in their memory. Jamaican food is as diverse as the country it comes from and it's very different in many ways from other Caribbean cuisines.

Sonia set up Mama Cynth's Yard Food in March, right at the start of the pandemic. She started offering authentic home cooked Jamaican food on a small scale and the trial proved to be very successful. Working from her home in Bullen's Green Lane, Sonia now offers a substantial menu of Jamaican dishes for delivery in the St Albans area between 5.00pm and 7.30pm on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Orders should be placed by 6.00pm the day before delivery.



Curry mutton with rice and peas

Nicky Packman – Forever Living

Nicky Packman's Covid story is a little different. Nicky has run a successful business from home in Colney Heath on a part time basis for the past 11 years. She is an independent distributor for a major global brand of health, wellbeing, nutrition, skin care, personal care and weight management products. The 42 year old company is Forever Living and its products feature Aloe Vera and Bee Hive as their key ingredients. They distribute their products in more than 160 countries using independent distributors like Nicky who sell the products directly to consumers. They are the world's largest grower, manufacturer and producer of Aloe Vera products. Nicky was fortunate enough to visit their growing and manufacturing facilities in Texas a couple of years ago.

The opportunity to work from home in hours that suit her individual circumstances as a working mum were attractive to Nicky at the outset and continue to be so. She has established and grown her customer base and has helped many new distributors get started, both here and abroad.

Much of her business before the pandemic was generated by direct contact with her customers. She attended appropriate events to demonstrate and sell the products and relied on word of mouth to reach new consumers.

As well as Colney Heath and Smallford, Mama Cynth's delivery area comprises St Albans, London Colney and Welham Green.

Sonia's food is freshly cooked to order and is delivered chilled ready to heat and serve or to freeze. Her guiding principle is to serve food which is of the same quality you would enjoy if you were going to her home for a dinner party. As well as her food being very tasty, her portions are generous.

You can find Sonia's contact details, menu and ordering details on her website www.mamacynths.co.uk or you can phone her on 07508 558967.

There's no doubt that Sonia has tapped into a market for good food delivered to your door during the pandemic, and I'm sure that Mama Cynth's will thrive in the future. Mama Cynth's is another Colney Heath business which deserves your support in these difficult times.



Escoveitch fish with festival dumplings

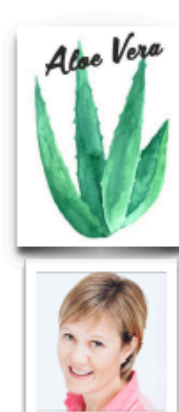
So what has changed because of the pandemic?

Operating under the government's restrictions has meant that Nicky has had to curtail her face-to-face interaction with her customers she has been unable to attend events in person to promote her products. However her online shop, which was little used before Covid, has seen huge growth in business. Nicky has also made much more use of social media and online networking groups.

All in all business has been good during the pandemic, especially in health and wellbeing products and in personal care. For more information contact Nicky on 07973 102313 or nicky@nickypackman.com www.shop.nickypackman.com



Nicky in the Aloe fields in Southern Texas



Why use Aloe Vera?

- ☐ great for skin, hair & nails
- ☐ supports immune system
- ☐ an ideal digestive aid
- ☐ supports gastrointestinal health
- ☐ rich in nutrients

For free local delivery contact

Nicky Packman

Independent Distributor of

Forever Living Products

07973 102313

nicky@nickypackman.com

www.shop.nickypackman.com



TARGETED SKINCARE



meJulies

Another great piece of local entrepreneurship is the new business set up during the pandemic by James Franklin.

James is well known in the village as he helps to run the Magpies, an Under 14's football team at Colney Heath FC and his wife is a TA at the local primary school.

On May 15th – his 50th birthday – James realised that he needed to do something different because his promotional sports goods company was unable to acquire its supplies of footballs from overseas.

James's mother Julie was a passionate home cook originally from Thailand who died suddenly in February 2020. She was well known in the village for offering food to people wherever she went - whether they were hungry or not!

In her honour, James started cooking Thai food for friends and participants in his Friday quiz group. He used the knowledge and experience gained from watching his Mum cook and MeJulies came into being.

MeJulies offers "great food cooked the way Mum taught me. Prepared fresh in the day of order and cooked with passion, love and honesty".

James produces a set menu for two for delivery or collection on Saturday evenings but is aiming to increase this to more nights per week. Pre ordering is essential. Very often James has sold out the weekend's capacity by Tuesday or Wednesday, so one needs to get an order placed early!

The food is cooked from fresh ingredients at James's home. He achieved a high pass in his food hygiene Level 2 Test and ensures every precaution is taken during preparation and cooking. His mantra is Quality and Freshness. When I spoke to James I was immediately struck that his was a labour of love, combining a business and a hobby.

Having ordered early a couple of weeks ago, I can honestly say that this food is as good a Thai meal as I have ever eaten.

A typical set meal for two is illustrated here.

To view the type of menu which meJulies offers, visit the website www.mejulies.co.uk or search **MeJulies** in FACEBOOK and join the group for weekly updates. If you want to ask any questions about the food you can email on info@mejulies.co.uk



The editors would like to hear about more local entrepreneurs and businesses.

We are happy to feature information about people and their ideas, and to include promotional material – its free of charge.

COVID : data and opinion

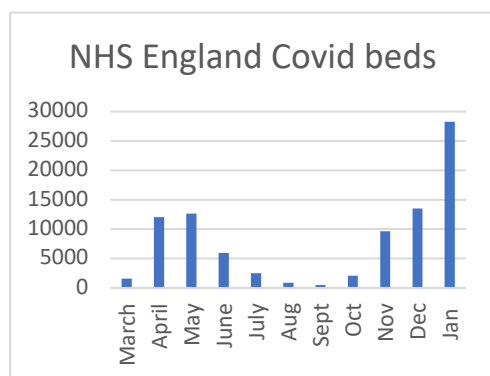
The winter second wave of the pandemic, expected by many, has arrived. Combined with a new variant of Covid-19, apparently much more infectious, has resulted in the NHS getting close to capacity. Fears of our hospitals becoming overwhelmed has placed our community in the “Stay at Home” Tier 5 lockdown. For some who hear “the virus is out of control” the current situation is terrifying; for the rest, caution is the watchword as we hear about more people we know getting the virus.

It is hard to believe that the daily reports of the rising number of positive tests, hospital occupancy data, and the grim death toll, continue to be denied by the “Covidiot” – who don’t wear masks, don’t understand what 2m is, and barge into our village shop ignoring the “only 2 people inside” rule. Spare a thought for Manish and Jayshree who face abuse (or worse) if they said they would not serve these fools.

The daily reports provide the headline figures and then move on to the individual “human interest” stories. The finer grain of data in-between is deemed by the broadcasters to be too complex for their viewers. If you are interested read on.

The number of positive tests is a function of the number of tests being done. More testing means more positives will be found. Clearly many people have the virus but, because many are asymptomatic (the symptoms are mild or are not present), it may be far more widespread than the data tells us. It has been reported that one in 20 people in London may be infected.

Hospitalisation is a much clearer indicator and the data from NHS England is worth understanding. This chart shows the headline data for the number of Covid beds at the beginning of each month.



So who is hospitalized?

63% of the hospital beds for Covid were occupied by people in the age group 65+. The school age group accounted for 1% and the working age group (20-64) 35%.

As we noted in our last E-News, the age of those affected is important to understand.

The detailed NHS England data below was for the period up to 30th December 2020. The data shows

- the number of people hospitalised with Covid and
- the proportion per 10,000 of the population size in each age group

AGE	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
0-5	15 0.04	56 0.14	77 0.19	427 1.07
6-17	12 0.01	39 0.05	108 0.13	411 0.51
18-64	588 0.17	2,241 0.66	3,543 1.04	18,706 5.52
65-84	410 0.46	226 0.25	4,300 4.80	22,413 25.02
85+	126 0.90	825 5.91	1906 13.64	12,062 86.34
Total	1,151	3,387	9,934	54,019

This shows increases in the rate of hospitalization in all age groups, and the huge increase in December is increasing in all age groups – and the risk of being hospitalized increases exponentially in the over 65’s; the rate 65-84 age group being over 44 times that of 6-17 year olds

The risk of dying for school children is extremely low. The risk in “working age” group 20 to 59 is low, but over 60 the risk is comparatively much higher, and very high in the 80+ age group.

The good news is that flu has apparently dropped by 90%.

The cost of restrictions and lockdown

The slow response to the virus threat in the UK (and most of Europe) allowed the virus to spread widely throughout the population. The first lockdown and subsequent restrictions suppressed the infection rate only allowing it to spread again as restrictions were eased.

A feature of Covid-19 is asymptomatic transmission. The schools were closed in January because the Government has now said they may be “vectors for transmission”. Closing the schools not only has a negative impact on children’s learning and development, but increases the number of workers at home on furlough.

The impact on the economy in 2020 is almost impossible to grasp. By October 2020 24.3% of all businesses in the UK had paused trading or closed. Hospitality, construction, retail, and manufacturing are the worst hit. Continuing furlough payments, loans, and grants from the “Magic Money Tree” is postponing the day of reckoning. Many businesses on this life support may not be able to stand on their own feet when it is tuned down and then switched off.

The economic price of lockdown continues to rise. The impact on the UK economy so far is double that experienced in the 2008/9 financial crash. This is a double-dip recession, not seen since 1975. Unemployment is stated at 4.9% at the end of October but this only counts people actively seeking work. With lockdown and with job centres closed they can't. The “claimant count” in November of 2.7m is 8% of the UK workforce. With a third of the 9.9m people on furlough expected to lose their jobs when (or maybe if?) furlough ends, the total could reach 18%.

The Government's main, and it seems only, plan is to maintain the lockdown until vaccination protects the vulnerable. The latest gamble, and perhaps the worst so far in the large catalogue of errors, is to increase the interval between the two doses of the vaccine from 3 weeks to 12 weeks. This is a big, and arguably an unnecessary, risk. The Pfizer's licensing is based on a 21 day interval and there is no evidence that the level of protection will be achieved when the interval is extended. Indeed, there is a risk that the increased interval may breed vaccine resistant mutations in the virus. So much for “following the science”.

The prioritized immunisation plan, dated 30 December 2020 starts with residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, then all those over 80 and frontline health and social care workers, followed down the age groups with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals and those with underlying health conditions. It will be several months before the vulnerable receive both doses plus more weeks before they are “safe”. The Government will not, or maybe cannot, forecast a date when the lockdown will ease and what restrictions may follow.

To get the economy working again lockdown has to end - but how to do it?. If schools are closed, people who could work can't. And if the older people continue to be exposed the NHS is threatened with being overrun, and lockdown or severe restrictions have to continue.

Getting the economy up and running, the schools open, people back at work, pubs and restaurants open will require a huge effort. At the same time those whose lives have been damaged will require support and a hand up to survive and thrive in the post-Covid era. They must not be allowed to become the forgotten “underclass” like those in the heavy industries in the North in the 1970's.

At last the Government is moving towards “Covid securing” the UK's borders requiring arrivals to have had a Covid test before departing for the UK and held in a quarantine hotel before being allowed to mix freely in the community. It is astonishing that this has taken so long when countries like Australia and New Zealand did this from the very beginning.

And so to a potentially controversial opinion

We have heard suggestions that the lockdown will be eased in mid February, or maybe by Easter on 2nd April.

The 65+ age group is clearly most at risk using 62% of the Covid hospital beds and over 90% of the deaths. The group may all have received their first jab in March but this may not provide enough immunity. It may be around June by the time all have had their second jab plus the 3 weeks to provide them confidence to mix with others.

Unless the 65+ age group is “shielded”, the socially and economically damaging restrictions look like they will extend into the summer.

The immunisation priority groups should be reviewed to include including the people testing the public for Covid, and to open the schools, the teachers and school staff.

The lockdown announced on 19th December, “cancelling Christmas” generated a new wave of humour, this being a good example



To end on a positive note.

The pandemic and our response strengthened our sense of community and the value of healthy social contact, and provides opportunities : to be better prepared for “next time”, and to change how we live – the advantages for some from more working from home, the importance of good housing, gardens, access to outdoor space, reduced air pollution etc.

The desire for safe and healthy social contact increases as the “confinement” continues. Already there are plans for community events when the situation allows.

ST MARKS CHURCH



www.stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk

Tel: 01727 825175. Email: office@stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk

We were so grateful that we could hold our Christmas services and also, for the first time ever, open the church for a Nativity Trail. This was a great success, every class from the school visited and it was a privilege to witness children's joyful reactions to each scene. It was also enjoyed and appreciated by the members of the public who visited outside of the school times. The photos below give a taste of some of the scenes from the angel visiting Mary through to the wise men!



Now, here we are again in a lockdown and, although places of worship are allowed to be open this time around, at the time of writing St. Mark's has reverted to having a Digital Sunday. These services are available online every Sunday from 10.30 am on our website:

www.stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk

You will find all our previous Digital Sundays and on-line services on our website as well. We will release details of our Easter Services on our website shortly.



We are planning to host an Online Alpha Course soon. This is a relaxed course where you can explore questions of life and faith from the comfort of your own home. For more details please go to our website or email the office:-

office@stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk

Subject to the restrictions and guidance by the government and the Church of England, St. Mark's is available for funerals and weddings.

As we continue in these uncertain times for us all, we offer you our prayers and support.

A verse from the Bible:

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Psalm 46: 1

A prayer for ourselves, our families and our community:-

Lord God, we thank you for the blessings of life and love, hope and peace.

Comfort those who have lost loved ones, those who feel anxious or lonely
and those with financial worries.

We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together they would not feel apart.

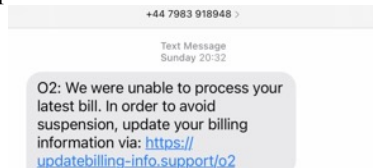
We ask for your help in our communicating, our connecting and our caring.

Amen.

OWL (On-line watch link)

With lockdown and unemployment it is no great surprise that we have seen a number of reports of crimes on Colney Heath Village Facebook. Members of the group are vigilant and quick post alerts and reports. Fortunately most of us are not victims of this kind of crime.

But many criminals are using remote methods – phone calls, texts and the internet – and this seems to affect many people. Call blocking systems on landline phones is a good way to avoid nuisance calls and scam attempts. Mobile phones are now more frequently targeted. This is an example from one received last week



Those residents who are on OWL will have noticed the number of warnings about “confidence trick theft” aka scams, alongside housebreaking, theft of catalytic converters from cars etc.

The following are lifted from recent alerts

Impersonation of police officers

We are reminding residents in Welwyn Hatfield to stay vigilant after two recent incidents of scam phone calls where offenders have pretended to be police officers. In one of the cases, the fraudsters persuaded a 99 year old man into handing over thousands of pounds. Please speak to elderly friends or relatives to make them aware.

Covid-19 scams

Criminals are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy

The NHS will NEVER ask for payment - the vaccine is free, will NEVER ask for your bank details, will NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine, will NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport

Text with link to website

We have been alerted to a highly believable scam which starts with a text and advises the user that they are eligible to apply for the vaccine, and to click on the link in the text message. The user is then led to a web page, which looks very convincing and asks them to complete some details, in order for them to be able to apply for the vaccine.

The details asked for Name, Address, Date of birth, Proof of address, Card payment details

UK Finance has provided details of 10 financial scams related to Covid-19; these are in the next column copied from this link

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/news/uk-finance-reveals-ten-covid-19-scams-public-should-be-high-alert>

The ten scams to be on the lookout for and how to spot them:

Covid-19 financial support scams

1. Criminals have sent **fake government emails** designed to look like they are from government departments offering grants of up to £7,500. The emails contain links which steal personal and financial information from victims.
2. Fraudsters have also been sending scam emails which offer access to **‘Covid-19 relief funds’** encouraging victims to fill in a form with their personal information.
3. Criminals have been targeting people with official-looking emails offering a **‘council tax reduction’**. These emails, which use government branding, contain links which lead to a fake government website which is used to access personal and financial information.
4. Fraudsters are also preying on benefit recipients, offering to help apply for **Universal Credit**, while taking some of the payment as an advance for their “services”.

Health scams

5. One of the most shocking scams that has appeared during the pandemic has involved using the **NHS Test and Trace** service. Criminals are preying on an anxious public by sending phishing emails and links claiming that the recipient has been in contact with someone diagnosed with Covid-19. These lead to fake websites that are used to steal personal and financial information or infect devices with malware.
6. Victims are also being targeted by fake adverts for Covid-related products such as **hand sanitizer and face masks** which do not exist.

Lockdown scams

7. Criminals are sending fake emails and texts claiming to be from **TV Licensing**, telling people they are eligible for six months of free TV license because of the coronavirus pandemic. Victims are told there has been a problem with their direct debit and are asked to click on a link that takes them to a fake website used to steal personal and financial information.
8. Amid a rise in the use of **online TV subscription services** during the lockdown, customers have been targeted by criminals sending convincing emails asking them to update their payment details by clicking on a link which is then used to steal credit card information.
9. Fraudsters are also exploiting those using **online dating websites** by creating fake profiles on social media sites used to manipulate victims into handing over their money. Often criminals will use the identities of real people to strike up relationships with their targets.
10. Criminals are using social media websites to advertise **fake investment opportunities**, encouraging victims to “take advantage of the financial downturn”. Bitcoin platforms are using emails and adverts on social media platforms to encourage unsuspecting victims to put money into fake investment companies using fake websites.

HERTS RURAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

Rural Support Networks (RSNs) are village voluntary support groups, mostly established in response to Coronavirus, which have been helping vulnerable, lonely and elderly people isolated throughout the pandemic.

CDA Herts has been reaching out to the RSNs to gain an understanding of the vital work they are doing and to see if the 1,350 volunteers need any support. CDA has identified over 80 RSNs covering 175 villages and hamlets across Hertfordshire helping over 2000 people with shopping, prescriptions, social and emotional support.

The following Covid-19 information and guidance is from Community Help Hertfordshire and shared by CDA Herts

To get support if you're affected by coronavirus please contact HertsHelp for:

- help to get food, household essentials and medication
- financial support and advice
- services that can support you if you are feeling lonely or down
- ways to improve your health and wellbeing

Visit www.hertshelp.net email info@hertshelp.net or call 0300 123 4044

Hertfordshire is in a **National Lockdown** along with the rest of England as Coronavirus case rates continue to rise. Residents are told we must stay at home. The UK's Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty has said: "We have faced several grave moments during our battle against coronavirus. But right now, the country is perhaps facing the most serious yet. The new, more transmissible variant of this disease is spreading rapidly across the country and having tragic consequences."

Keep on doing the basics:

- make sure we wash our hands regularly and thoroughly
- keep our distance from others
- wear a face-covering when required
- self-isolate when told to do so

COVID vaccinations

The UK's Chief Medical Officer reminds us that these restrictions will not last forever. Science has delivered new vaccines, drugs and tests, with more on the way, in record time. People will be reunited. Vaccines and new treatments offer us hope and a clear way out. But we are not there yet and should not act as if we are.

We can all play our part to assist the vaccination programme by:

- waiting to be contacted by the NHS – you will be invited to an appointment when it is your turn. Remember the NHS will never ask you to pay for a COVID-19 vaccination
- attending both of your booked appointments
- continuing to follow all the guidance to control the spread of the virus
- ensuring that you are registered with a GP who may contact you when it is your turn to receive the vaccine

Everyone who is vaccinated will need a booster jab, this will be administered up to 12 weeks after the first dose. It takes a few weeks after getting the second dose for the person's antibodies to reach their optimum level. Even after a second dose of the vaccination, in order to protect yourself, your family, friends and colleagues, you must still follow the general advice at work, at home and when you are out and about: •practise social distancing • wear a face mask • wash your hands carefully and frequently • follow the current Government guidance.

For more information and guidance for residents and businesses during the pandemic [Click Here](#)

For further information about their work supporting RSNs please contact tim.hayward-smith@cdaherts.org.uk or visit www.cdaherts.org.uk



The Colney Heath Community Support Group, established in March 2020, is the local RSN formed by volunteers from local organisations including St Mark's Church, the Twinning Association, the WI, Smallford Residents Association, and the Colney Heath Village Hall.

Contact jackclemow@gmail.com or call 07803 313 525 visit <https://communitysupportgroup.weebly.com>

BEAVERS, CUBS AND SCOUTS

We are pleased to be able to have this opportunity to update the Parish on the latest position on the lease on the Scout HQ in Roestock Park.

But before we do that, we are delighted to report that despite the pandemic and despite the protracted negotiations with the Parish Council (after being evicted in Dec 2019) we are continuing to offer Beavers, Cubs and Scouts across the parish regular activities via Zoom. As one young Scout said last week "it's the highlight of my week". There is lots of fun happening on the weekly Zoom sessions but we are longing for the time when we can continue to get back to face to face Scouting.

Weekly zoom activities to date have included working towards the communicator badge, a code breaking murder mystery eve, making bird feeders, a race night and a Christmas party night to name but a few. Some members even enjoyed a virtual camp along with hundreds of thousands of young people in Scouting in the UK. The group is growing with more girls and boys joining – Scouting has never been needed more for our local young people! We still have spaces for girls and boys wishing to join Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and adults who wish to join us too. See below for details of how to get in touch.

Despite the above, negotiations are still ongoing with the Parish Council and we thought it might be useful to provide an update. Support from our local community has been tremendous (thank you) but it continues to be long, convoluted and painfully drawn out process with the Parish Council.

At the end of 2019 over 9,000 people signed our petition, in January 2020 we made a public statement at the Parish Council meeting, in February 2020 we gave the Parish Council a clear proposal for a suggested lease agreement. In October we gave them a full list and time plan for the works we are prepared to undertake (and pay for) which addresses all the points on the survey they commissioned in July 2020.

From this we have drafted and provided a detailed schedule of works (including obtaining formal quotes from companies willing to undertake the work). The council have promised us a draft heads of terms and when these arrive we are hoping that they will be fair and appropriate. We are hoping to see first sight of these ASAP and will then begin what will hopefully be a speedy and sensible set of negotiations.

The Scout HQ is clearly a vital part of our local community and is the hub of the Scout group in the parish - not just used for the weekly section meetings, but also used for a host of other scouting related needs and activities. We are keen to finalise the details of the lease asap so that as soon as the pandemic allows we can be ready to get back to our home and continue where we left off in November 2019.

In order to fund this work we are in the process of developing a fundraising campaign to raise (initially) the £30,000 needed for the most urgent work on the Scout HQ.

The good news is we have already raised just over £12,000 to date – but we still need more support! In the coming months we will bring further details of how you can get involved.

We have a cracking team supporting us so far including legal expertise from the Hertfordshire Scouts County Commissioner who lives in the parish, a charity consultant who is also a charity CEO, a team of surveyors and professional tradesmen and women and a professional grant funding writer, all of whom are giving their advice freely.

We are also supported by the district, county and national Scout associations.

We are constantly looking for more people to get involved and to join our fabulous team. Could you help us fundraise or be a project manager for us? Could you offer admin skills or any other skills you may have? Or maybe you are keen to join us as one of our Scout Group Leaders – no previous experience necessary! If so, then what are you waiting for?

Visit our website for more information at www.colneyheathscouts.org or contact us on info@colneyheathscouts.org to find out more.

Skills for life and adventure that's what we do - and it's not just for the children!

Colney Heath Scout Group
Charity number 276951

PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

LIABILITIES AND ASSETS

As a resident recently commented on the Parish Council's approach "I just cant get my head around the concept that community assets like parks and fields are liabilities, and liabilities like the "uninsurable" Scout Hut are assets. Its like a negative test being a good, and a positive test being bad."

Horseshoe field and Gloucester Park

Council meeting held 22 October 2020
Horseshoe Field

The recent Freedom of Interest in this matter was used as a background paper. The purchase of the field was not recalled in any minutes held by the Parish Council and it was noted again that retrospective approval had to be obtained some 4 years after purchase. However, the cost of purchase was confirmed at £26,143.68. Cllr C Brazier confirmed that his understanding of the purchase was that there were horses on the field kept by a traveller, and it was purchased in the interests of the residents of Smallford. Concerns were shared over the selling of the land as it was purchased to protect the land from development. There were several options for the land and it was agreed that Finance & Governance Committee would discuss this at a specially convened Committee meeting focused on land to be held 3 December 2020. An expression of interest document would be drafted for review.

Finance and Governance Committee meeting December 2020 Draft minutes

LAND – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Paper regarding one expression of interest circulated for Gloucester Fields and a further proposal received this week for Horseshoe Field. It was duly proposed seconded and unanimously RESOLVED that expressions of interest be sought with a deadline of February 2021 dependant on newspaper advert and circulation over Christmas and New Year.

.....
Interesting development at the Parish Council meeting, 21st January 2021, held on Zoom

Members of the public who did not identify themselves when trying to join were not admitted.

This was because there had, apparently, been some unpleasantness at the Planning Meeting held on 19th January.

The draft minutes of that meeting states

At 7.10pm there was a brief interruption of the meeting where 7 attendees were permitted to enter the meeting and due to their inappropriate verbal and visual behaviour, they were each removed. They and all 21 other participants in the waiting room were asked to provide their full name and postcode using the chat box function prior to being allowed to re-enter the meeting, there was no response so all were removed from the meeting waiting room at 7.14pm

THE SCOUTS

It is now more than a year since the Scouts were "evicted" from their hut and HQ in Roestock Park, the Parish Council having "taken" ownership of the building after the Scouts' lease on the land expired.

A joint statement dated 1st February 2020 of the Parish Council's website states

Representatives of the Scouts and the Parish Council met on Tuesday 21st January 2020 to discuss the current situation around the lease on the land in Roestock Park, Colney Heath where the Scout HQ is situated. A productive meeting was held and both parties were able to state their questions, concerns and discuss some potential future options to try to move things forward.

Both parties are committed to bringing the current situation to an amicable and acceptable agreement and the Scout Group have agreed to draft a renewed proposal for the Parish Council for discussion and consideration at their next meeting on 20th February 2020.

It will take a few weeks to discuss these issues further and we would appeal for some calm and space to enable us to do this. In the short term the Scouts are making some temporary arrangements to enable the young people to continue their Scouting. We will update you all again when we have further information.

So what has happened in the 13 months that have elapsed? Looking at the minutes of the Parish Council meetings a "few weeks" of "calm and space" now seems somewhat over-optimistic.

If readers had attended the meetings and listened to what was said, rather than what is minuted (set out below), they may not have come away with the impression that an agreement is being amicably achieved.

But the Scouts report above seems hopeful with the promise of "heads of terms" for a lease from the Parish Council.

The community awaits an update on the joint statement.

20th February 2020 Council meeting

20/118	<p>ROESTOCK HUT</p> <p>A paper with the proposal and associated paper was noted by Council.</p> <p>Cllr Solts wished to thank all those involved for a useful meeting and that he felt the Council and Scouts were in a better place. It was also excellent to note that there were funds available from the Scouts to maintain the building.</p> <p>Cllr Cook referred to LG Act 1972 s123 quoting the achievement of best value when letting public assets.</p> <p>Cllr Slaughter said she thought it important that the Council pay and carry out the building survey. Cllr Cook proposed and Cllr Solts seconded a proposal that the Clerk be instructed to obtain 3 quotes and attempt to quickly return this to Council for the next meeting. The Council wished to express thanks to David Barker and the Clerk for their work on getting the joint statement agreed and issued.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk</p>
---------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

19th March 2020 Council meeting

20/134	<p>ROESTOCK HUT</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that after two rounds of requesting quotes with six companies approached only one quote had been submitted of £1500. Council discussed and noted that access to the building would be restricted. It further noted the building had no hot water in the toilets and is not available for public use during the current COVID-19 restrictions. The type of survey was agreed and a budget of £1500 was set for the works. Acceptance of the quote was proposed by Cllr H Brazier and seconded by Cllr C Brazier and unanimously RESOLVED by all those present.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk</p>
---------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

14th May 2020 Council meeting

CLERK REPORT	
a) Roestock Hut	<p>Council noted contents of report and update.</p> <p>It was noted that any correspondence received would be discussed by the Finance & Governance Committee who would bring recommendations to Council.</p>

11th June 2020 Finance and Governance Committee

- a) ROESTOCK HUT**
- Members are asked to review correspondence and comment. Survey carried out in late May report not yet received. It was noted that the representative was now requesting again a short-term licence which was a change in the previous position. The Committee recommended that Council would in a better position to review once the report had been received and received. On receipt of the report the matter was recommended to be discussed in an Emergency Full Council meeting.

16th June 2020 Emergency Council meeting held

No record of any discussion or decision

25th June Council Meeting Minutes not available

11th July 2020 Finance and Governance Committee

- a) ROESTOCK HUT**
- No update, the survey report has been delayed. This has been chased and should be received by the end of July.

23rd July 2020 Council meeting

The Scout Hut Planned Preventative Maintenance report arrived at 4.30pm this afternoon, once reviewed will go to Finance & Governance Committee Meeting 3 September 2020 for recommendation and then to Full Council 24 September 2020.

3rd September 2020 Finance and Governance Committee

- a) ROESTOCK HUT**
- The Committee noted receipt of the Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) report. Committee confirmed that the Council were not obliged to issue a licence or a lease on the building to any party.
- Concerns were raised over the previous history of the group to maintain the building over the past 20 years and the confidence to upkeep the building to a required standard in the future.
- It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the building should not be used or let until it was legally compliant, and Committee would like Full Council to reconfirm this resolution.
- It was also duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** to give the Scout Group until 12 October 2020 to provide a report containing their written and detailed proposal for Roestock Hut.

24th September 2020 Council Meeting

- **Roestock Hut – Scout group proposal**

It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the matter would be delayed until a proposal was received from the Scout group and would be discussed at the next Full Council meeting in October 2020.

It was further proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the building in Roestock Park should not be used by any organisation including the Parish Council for any purpose until it was in a useable condition. If access were required, an officer would be required to be onsite at all times.

22nd October 2020 Council Meeting

b) Roestock Hut

There was a comment about the tonality of the letter and several members would like to see the advice quoted in the letter. Council thanked those who wrote for their response and putting the detail together. It remained unclear how the works listed would be funded and this would require more clarification. It was suggested that the details requested would be discussed at the Finance & Governance Committee meeting in November to include a timetable for works, look at the rent amount, length of lease and further details of funding sources. This was duly

5th November 2020 Finance and Governance Committee

a) Roestock Hut

Council requested more details on the funding timetable, length of lease and sight of the advice, with particular emphasis on funding sources. This Committee were delegated to draft a response to the Scouts, and this should include these details. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the draft letter be circulated by email so each Councillor could see the proposed letter and their comments be added the Clerk would have delegated authority to ensure the letter was a fair representation of all views.

26th November 2020 Council Meeting No record of any discussion or decision

3rd December 2020 Finance and Governance Committee

ROESTOCK HUT

Correspondence was noted. It was clarified that the Scout representative spoke when standing orders were suspended as confirmed in the minutes between 8.14pm - 8.33pm confirming that no decision was made or any arrangements were confirmed during this time. It was noted the correspondence stated a confirmed approach of urgent, important, and nice to have repairs was agreed by Committee (Reference 2e) The Committee noted this was not the case as no council agreements could be made at that time of suspended standing orders.

The Committee reconfirmed their concerns regarding the serious financial implications of acceptance of this type of agreement to proceed with works and a lease on this basis. It was confirmed that the Scout group wanted a 20-year lease for £125 per annum and that they had raised £10,000 towards the costs of refurbishments. It was duly proposed and seconded and **RESOLVED** to enter into more detailed negotiations with the Scout group. A draft heads of terms would be drawn up and sent out to all councillors who are members of this committee for comment. It was noted that comments would then need to be sought from the Scout group along with financial details and confirmation of funds. It was duly proposed, seconded, and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be instructed to take over the utility bills immediately.

17th December 2020 Council Meeting

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC 7.04pm Standing Orders were suspended so members of the public could ask questions/make statements to the Council. All attendees were unmuted, and the Chairman asked for any questions. A resident asked about an item in another meeting relating to the utility bills at the Roestock Hut. Council confirmed that these would be taken over and the final meter readings taken early in 2020 would be used by the Council to calculate the bills. Any group wishing to claim a refund of utilities paid would need to contact the Council and request this in writing with evidence of payments made.

21 January 2021 Council Meeting No record of any discussion or decision

COLNEY HEATH COMMUNITY PARK

The Community Park extends from St Marks Close, opposite the main entrance to the church, to the A414 and is bisected by the flowing water of the Ellenbrook. There are pedestrian entrances at St Marks Close and at the foot of the pedestrian bridge over the dual carriageway. The park is currently shut.

The site is owned by Hertfordshire County Council. Prior to the early 1990s it was a Highways Depot but was identified as a location that could contribute to the aims of the Watling Chase Community Forest to improve the landscape and provide opportunity for enjoyment of the outdoors and nature.

In the Winter 1994 edition of the Chronicle Derrick Crump, then Chairman of the Parish Council, noted *"the Parish Council, in partnership with Herts County Council and the Groundwork Trust are about to restore the long-standing eyesore...the derelict site will be landscaped and trees, grass and flower meadow established. A new path will link the footbridge to the road opposite the church and the river will be cleaned up"*.

The works involved many local volunteers notably on tree planting days during the winter to spring months of 1995.



The site has been managed by Colney Heath Parish Council since the early 1990s but in 2019 they chose not to renew the lease so the site has reverted back to HCC.

Derrick Crump continues to have a keen interest in the Community Park and has recently repaired the bridge over the Ellenbrook. He writes as follows :

Long standing residents may remember the very popular teacher, Mr Jessop, at Colney Heath school who led a project focussed on the site with classroom and field activities, including planting of the circular copse of trees on the A414 side of the park. Other community groups contributed then and subsequently to maintaining the park including the Scouts, the Church and the WI (be careful of their oak tree as you enter from the church gate).

The pocket park is a haven for nature. The impact of the A414 is mitigated by a large earth bund densely planted with native trees and shrubs. Between the bund and the river is a wildflower meadow.

The river maintains a good flow year-round and occasionally floods the site in winter. An attractive wooden bridge connects to the grassland and woodland opposite the church. There are some good-sized oaks along with sycamore, hawthorn and blackthorn. Depending on the season you can see many butterflies including speckled wood, meadow brown, gatekeeper and whites along with many other insects, notably bees and brightly coloured dragonflies.



Seen along the river this year have been mallard, moorhen, heron, egret and kingfisher as well as grass snake and small fish. Foxes and muntjac deer can be spotted by those approaching cautiously and as expected of a relatively undisturbed woodland there are a range of birds (tits, finches, blackbirds, robin etc) and winter visitors such as redwings.

Given that HCC and St Albans Council have declared a climate emergency (with the need for greater tree cover one policy response), that the national nature (biodiversity) crisis is now well documented and the value of nature for our health and well-being having been amplified by the COVID crisis, it is hoped that a solution to preserve and enhance this valuable pocket park can be found.

The newly formed Colney Heath Residents Association, 4ColneyHeath, is setting up a working party to prepare a proposal to resolve the current hiatus.

Volunteers to join the working party will be very welcome – email 4colneyheath@gmail.com for more information.

SMALLFORD STATION AND ALBAN WAY HERITAGE SOCIETY



Like most, if not all, voluntary organisations, we have been seriously affected by the COVID crisis – eg unable to partake in or hold any public events and activities. However, we've found ways to continue to be active!

Our Committee continues to meet online via Zoom and we held our first 'Zoom AGM' on Monday 26th October starting at 7.30pm.

Our Collaborative Community Project: Improving the Environment around Smallford Station

This exciting collaborative community Project remains our most important activity and we've been able to sustain several parts of it – even through the COVID Crisis.

Collaborating with St Albans District Council

Smallford Station falls in the section of The Alban Way owned by St Albans District Council and we've done our best to work with and alongside the Council since we began our work – 8 years ago. As an example, SADC established a Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) to improve the Alban Way which has been Project Managed by HCC Countryside Management Service (CMS) - and a substantial sum of money has been invested over the past 6 years. We have worked with CMS on GAP1 (2014-2019) – eg advising on railway-related design factors and providing historical information and graphics that you can read on the various information boards along the Alban Way. They are now into the GAP2 (2019-2024) phase and our Project is included.

A few months ago, SADC assigned one of their Officers to liaise with us and the various Departments that we will be negotiating with – and he's proving to be an excellent advocate and supporter of our Project.

Applying for Formal Planning Permission

With the support of three local people – Frances Leonard - a District Councillor who happens to be a Member of our Society, David Lane, a Town Planner, and John Clemow, a Retired Architect, both of whom have generously volunteered their services - we decided to make a Formal Planning Application to SADC.

We had a pre-application meeting with a Planning Officer on Thursday 7th January – online of course, via MS Teams. We are yet to receive a formal report from the Planning Department but believe the meeting went very well and we hope to get the support of The Council when it goes to Committee in the next month-or-two.

Collaboration with Oaklands College

Like all educational establishments, The College has been seriously affected by COVID.

As mentioned in a previous report, staff and students from 6 Departments at Oaklands College will be involved in our exciting collaborative community project :

Horticulture, Art and Design Graphics, Multimedia & Photography, Carpentry and Joinery, Trowel Trades, and Special Needs.

The first group to get involved have been Art & Design Level 2 students who are designing Railway Posters in the Art Deco Style of the 20's/30's. We provided a design brief, discussed this with them via an online MS Teams Meeting and seen their first attempts (again via MS Teams) – several of which are amazing! They will shortly have completed their designs and these will then be presented to and judged by us – and the best 5 will be displayed on Poster Boards along the back of the Platform – hopefully in March/April!

Staff and students from the Agriculture and Trowel Trades (ie brickwork) Departments were also hoping to be practically involved, but COVID has made any practical, outdoor work nigh on impossible – at least for the time being.

Projected Costs

Our latest estimates suggest that the costs of materials for our Project are quite substantial and in the region of –

£2,900 for work on the platform and around the car park

£5,300 to renovate and restore the goods van body – which will hold our exhibition



Above : Illustration of the scheme showing the proposals for the platform elements reproduced in the LNER 1930's style including seating, lighting and posters, and planters

(illustrations by John Clemow, FWR Consulting)

Right : Illustration of the renovated Goods Van Body, in the style of a Banana Van, where our exhibition will be stored and occasionally be available to the public. Also shown is the small deck between the goods van body and the platform. Ramped and steps access from the car park is planned.



Fundraising

We have set aside £1500 from our own funds and half of our Membership Fee income (£10 per person) will be donated to the Project.

Two residents have each generously donated £100.

We have received generous donations for two items that are not included in the Projected Costs above - Rae Borrás (from Borrás Construction based in St Albans) paid for the cost of transporting our goods van body from a farm in Earls Barton to Oaklands College, and from Cllr Frances Leonard for the full cost of our Planning Application.

Several Committee Members have promised donations. We have applied for a grant to Colney Heath Parish Council (we will probably know the results of this application by the end of January) and to HCC Locality Budget (John Hale being our Local County Councillor) – and this has been successful. Our plans to set up a 'Just Giving' webpage, approach local companies and residents and arrange fund-raising activities have obviously been put on hold until this COVID Crisis is over and we all get back to some kind of 'normality'.

If you'd like to make a contribution (which would be fantastic!), email me at info@smallford.org

Planning for the Future

Inevitably another COVID-dependent matter: however, if, for example, the Oaklands College Open and/or Lambing day, the St Albans Steam Fair and the Heritage Open Days do take place – we plan to be there!

And, should local community groups and organisations (such as Women's Institutes and other Societies) begin to meet again – we would be more than happy to provide a presentation on our work and especially on our exciting community project to Improve the Environment around Smallford Station!

If you'd like to know more about us (including becoming a Friend or Member of our Society) –

- Take a look at our website – www.smallford.org – where you can see part of our extensive collection of historical photographs, download several documents (including a booklet of our exhibition) and see scenes from two B&W movies (made in 1928 and 1933) showing trains arriving at the station.

Of particular interest might be Roger Taylor's photographic collection - <https://smallford.org/the-roger-taylor-collection/>

- Email info@smallford.org

Items available from us

We have a number of items that might be of interest to you; we don't sell them – but would appreciate a donation to our funds!

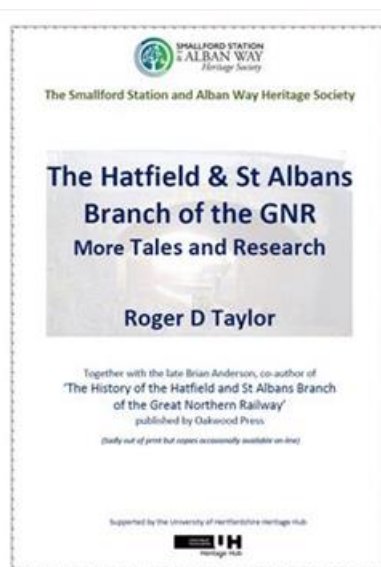
Fridge Magnets



Minimum suggested
donation
£2.50 + £1 p&p

Roger Taylor's 'More Tales'

1. Introduction, Biography
2. Railway Memories
3. The Branch Line on Film
4. Specials on the Branch
5. After the Line Closure in 1969
6. Halts, an Incident & Others
7. New Research & Corrections



Minimum suggested
£3.00 + £1 p&p

Jeff Lewis

Chair: Smallford Station & Alban Way Heritage Society

COLNEY HEATH VILLAGE HALL

www.colneyheathvillagehall.com

With the easing of the restrictions last summer several activities returned to the hall. Hirers had prepared careful assessments of how to keep their activities safe and to comply with the Village Hall's "Covid-19 Secure Facility" requirements. These were prepared with the guidance of CDA Herts and Action for Rural Communities England (ACRE).

The bookings calendar reveals the impact of the Tier 2 restrictions (lockdown 2) announced on 5th November with only Treasure Tots, the nursery and pre-school, allowed to continue. Then in the first couple of weeks in December a few hirers restarted only for Tier 4 to be announced just before Christmas.

The hall is owned by a charity on behalf of the local community who built it with villagers' donations. The trustees of the charity who manage the hall believe it should be kept open for the benefit of the community. At the same time we have been very careful about complying with the rules to maintain a clean and safe environment. Tim Hayward-Smith from CDA continues to provide us with very prompt updates on the ever changing rules issued by the Government, and with answers to our questions on interpretation of specific issues. Without this support we may have been tempted to close our doors. Some villages halls have closed, perhaps they have been unable to cope with the many pages of instructions from Government and the frequent changes.

2020 was a very difficult year with income from hirers reducing by 50%. We have reduced our expenditure where possible. However, our savings for a "rainy day" mean we have sufficient reserves to weather the storm - for the time being at least.

With the current "Tier 5 lockdown", 2021 has not started well but the nursery and pre-school continues to provide support for key workers who cannot "stay at home". We do not anticipate a relaxation for several months.

This year we face another unwelcome problem. The draft minutes of the Parish Council's Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2020 states

"VILLAGE HALL PARISH OFFICE

Correspondence was noted. Clerk has already been instructed to proceed with court proceedings. It was duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED with one abstention to continue with action as resolved by Council. Five invoices are available should Committee wish to share them in the amount of £2112.00, Committee duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED for the information to be shared on this occasion only.

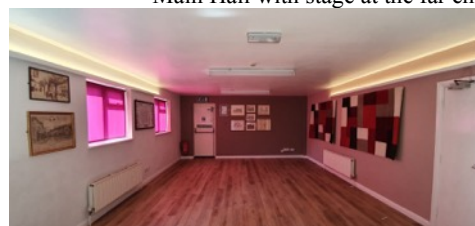
We will not engage "the court of public opinion" at this stage. The Parish Council has not initiated any discussion or engaged in a rational debate on why the trustees should pay them for £2,112 of legal fees they have incurred. We think this step should have occurred before the Council issue court proceedings.



Exterior view from the High street



Main Hall with stage at the far end



Studio space refurnished in 2019



Kitchen refurnished in 2019



View from across the Heath

COLNEY HEATH WI

Colney Heath WI has been unusually quiet in recent times. Although committee members have been beaver away in the background, there is little we can do to organise the customary full programme of activities at the moment.

We did however, deliver 'mini goodie bags' containing chocolate and Christmas good cheer to all members in December and also held online meet & chat sessions in December and January. It was lovely to see some familiar faces and catch up on each other's news.

We are now taking tentative steps towards an alternative online 2021 meeting programme until such times we can meet again in person. Whilst online meetings are a boon for many people during Covid restrictions, others are unable, or are reluctant to engage with new forms of communication, and it has been a difficult decision to temporarily move online knowing some members will not be able to participate.

We hope a good number of members can join us for February's Zoom meeting which features Ruth Nieman speaking about her book The Galilean Kitchen, which was inspired by the cooking of women from the Druze, Muslim, Christian and Bedouin communities of Northern Israel.

For details of future meetings please visit our new website: <https://colneyheathwi.weebly.com/> , find us on www.facebook.com/colneyheathwi, email colneyheathwi@google.com or call Joanna, Colney Heath WI President on 07956 502369.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



COLNEY HEATH BOISSY TWINNING ASSOCIATION (CBTA)

The CBTA is a local organisation providing opportunities to meet and socialise for the community. Membership is not required to enjoy our social events, which are not priced to be fundraisers.

Upcoming Events

Since the last newsletter we have not managed to hold any physical events, but the committee have continued to meet online frequently, where the business has focused on the wellbeing of the Association members, with whom we have been in contact on a regular basis. In addition to this, we have held the monthly 100 club draw.

Unfortunately, due to the current Lockdown we have had to curtail any plans to hold events. This, unfortunately, means that the Jumble sale, Colney Heath's equivalent of the Oxford Street January sales, needed to be cancelled.

We are, however, looking to hold a virtual Quiz evening in the near future.



AGM

On 15th January, the CBTA AGM was held, and it was great to see a number of members, even if it was via Zoom. Business was conducted efficiently leaving us time at the end to catch up with each other's news.

CBTA Twinning visit to Boissy

As mentioned previously we are due to visit our Twinning Village in France at the end of May. However, with all the current uncertainty we are looking at the visit taking place later in the year to avoid the possibility of a cancellation for the second time.

Alun, a member of the CNTA writes

We have been in contact with our French Friends and it is clear that their experience over the past year has been similar to ours in so many ways. They mentioned that the sky has been much clearer of Aircraft and that nature has become more emboldened, venturing close to the village!

One difference was that, while we may have seen more squirrels, foxes and the occasional muntjac deer, they have seen wild boar roaming from the nearby woodland. I'm not sure I would like to come across one of these on my daily exercise walk!!



Probably the most significant event of 2020 for Smallford Residents Association (SRA) was the overturning of the planning permission to quarry Ellenbrook Fields, in terms of disruption from increased traffic, dust, noise and the loss of amenity that the quarry would bring.

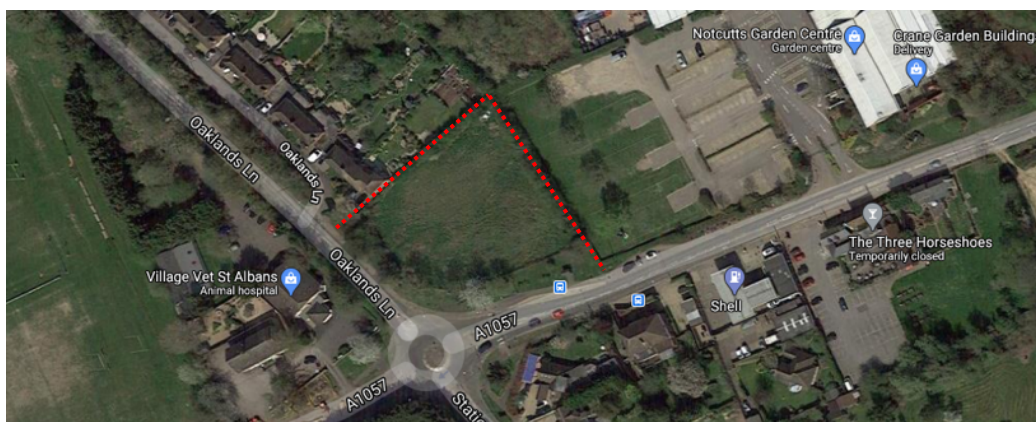
Also, the landowner had still not carried through its previous obligation to create and fund the Ellenbrook Country Park, which would have encompassed the proposed quarry footprint. This obligation was a condition to planning permission being granted years ago to develop Hatfield Business Park, the reneging of which was lost on no-one.

However, we have just heard news that the previous application for a development of 1100 houses in the north east corner of the old aerodrome, has been resurrected. The application is immediately adjacent to the land that was to be quarried, so no doubt the landowner wants to make the most of the land - we shall see how this application progresses, but in terms of traffic generated and intrusion into greenbelt, this will affect Smallford Residents although is located in Welwyn Hatfield District.

In the last newsletter, we reported that we would like to regenerate the derelict land called Horseshoe Field on the north east corner of Smallford roundabout. This was purchased five years ago by the Parish with the help of SRA for the benefit of the community and there were then plans to make the area into a communal garden.

The latest news is that we submitted a proposal to the Colney Heath Parish Council last December which outlined how this might be done, and now await their deliberations. However, we've been recently told that the Parish Council will shortly issue requests for expressions of interest in this land, and so our proposal will be considered with any others. It is hoped that local residents expressing their wish to improve the land for everyone's benefit, will carry some weight.

We wish Newsletter readers a Happy and Healthy New Year, with all the hope that the vaccines bring us.



Since our residents association was formed in October 2020 we have seen substantial growth in the membership. To help us achieve our aims and objectives we need large numbers of residents of the village to join us, ideally at least one member of every household. This will enable us to better represent your views clearly and with confidence on issues we think matter to you.

Our aims are

- to consult with and to listen to residents;
- to act as a collective voice in representing residents interests and rights;
- to improve the quality of life in the village; and
- to encourage a strong community spirit.

Some of the initiatives which we will consider promoting are

- a village news publication including a hard copy for those without internet;
- a notice display network in every street;
- a market for local goods, services and produce;
- a networking hub for the self- employed and for people working from home;
- a plan to maintain Colney Heath Community Park.

Once the Covid restrictions are behind us, we want to arrange some of the events which have been suggested to us. These include

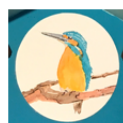
- a film night,
- a village fete,
- a pop-up internet café with assistance for residents,
- the return of the annual fun fair, and
- community BBQ
- themed food evenings.

Further suggestions are welcome.

It's simple to join – see details on the right.

There is no subscription fee but a small donation would be welcome but not essential. We believe that £5 per household is reasonable.

Renu Bansal, Chairperson



Association of friends and residents of Colney Heath village

4 COLNEY HEATH

Visit our website which already has a lot of information about the Association and our activities

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

COMING UP

In February

Our first update to members will be issued by e-mail and hardcopy to those who don't access the internet

In April

Our first newsletter is planned to be delivered in hardcopy to all households in the village

We hope to be accepted as an organisation to submit evidence to the planning inquiry to consider the appeal by the developer of the proposed Roundhouse Farm housing on Bullens Green Lane.

To join, please contact John ("Jack") Clemow by email at 4colneyheath@gmail.com, by phone on 07803 313525, or by post or by hand at 54 Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath AL4 0QS

Alternatively the membership form can be downloaded from our website with our bank details if you wish to donate

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

YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU, SO PLEASE JOIN US TODAY

ROUNDHOUSE FARM FIELD on Bullens Green lane

In December 2020 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council rejected the planning application for the “Roundhouse Farm” site. This is not Roundhouse Farm on Roestock Lane but farmland bounded by Bullens Green Lane, Fellowes Lane, Roestock Park and backs onto the gardens to houses in Roestock Gardens. The District boundary between St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield runs down the middle of the farm. While the application was formally for “access only”, it was for access to “up to 100 dwellings”. St Albans District Council had not made a decision in time. The applicant has appealed both decisions.

Over 200 objections from the public and adjoining owners have been made to both Planning Authorities.

The applicant has claimed “very special circumstances” for developing on Green Belt land with technical arguments regarding the need for housing to meet government targets and Local Authorities plans not being up to date.

The objections from the community include

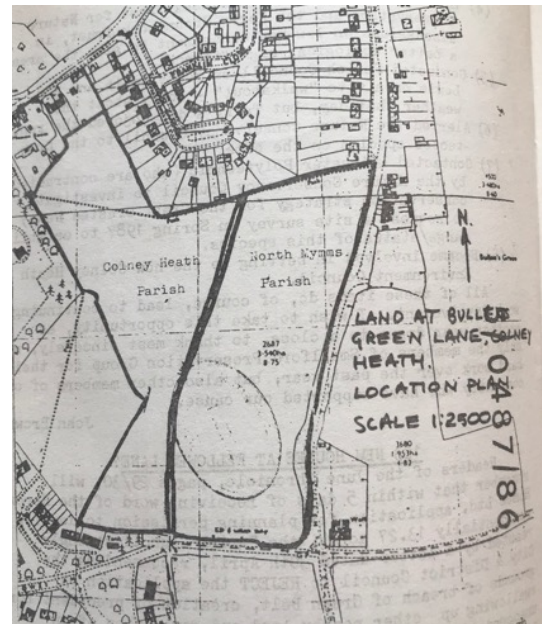
- the site is on Green Belt grade 3a agricultural land
- it is not “infilling” under any reasonable definition of that term
- unacceptable increase in traffic in an already congested area
- excessive increase in local population
- not enough primary or secondary school places or health services
- no bus services and transport means it is not sustainable
- the “affordable” component will not be realistically affordable
- developer mainly interested in profit

This 1960 map shows the “Roestock” area in 1960 with houses in “Manor Gardens” and Tollgate Road before Hall Gardens and Meadway was developed.

Many people think “enough is enough”.



The community will be ready for the second stage of this battle.



34 years ago the Chronicle No 46 December 1986 included the above picture and reported :

An application was made to build 123 new houses on the site. There were around 100 separate objections to the proposal made to both District Councils “a measure of very strong feeling”.

The application was subject to “deemed refusals” as the Planning Authorities did not respond within the time limit. St Albans Council comments included

The site is in the Green Belt and planning permission will not be given except in very special circumstances.

The site does not constitute an infilling plot within an otherwise build up frontage

It would result in an unacceptable increase in traffic

Welwyn Hatfield Council’s comments included the site is designated as Green Belt and the policy is to not allow development unless for agriculture.

The applicant, Heron Homes, appealed and then withdrew their appeal in January 1987. Meanwhile the Colney Heath Environment Council (CHEC) had submitted a number of points to the Secretary of State in preparation for the appeal hearing :

- massive population increase of village population
- problem of JMI school coping with extra children
- extra strain on bus services (there were some then)
- description of “infilling” not appropriate
- destruction of safe walking environment for old people and equestrians
- influx of sleeping and commuting population
- applicant motivated by profit

COLNEY HEATH SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The Colney Heath School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a charity that raises funds for equipment and experiences to enrich the education of the children who attend the school.

Over the last year it's been incredibly hard to hold some of our favourite events and we've had to postpone and improvise many of our plans. With a bit of modern technology and great support from parents/carers, teachers and locals alike I'm pleased to say that we still managed to raise £1,000 in the last term of 2020. Our Virtual Winter Wonderland was a big hit and a great showcase for many local and independent businesses.

Usually by now we'd have a packed list of events for the coming year that we'd like you to support but in 2021 we're having to play it by ear!

There are however two ways in which you could support us.



I'm delighted to say that Jimmy Franklin is holding another Zoom charity race night and will be donating half of the proceeds to the PTA. If you joined us for the last one, then you know it'll be a fun and entertaining night. If you didn't make it last time – don't miss out again! Keep a look out on the village Facebook page for updates and how to join.



The 200 Club is the easiest way that you can help the PTA to raise money. **For just £6 for the entire year** you can be entered into our lottery style draw. Your £6 buys you a number which is entered into a monthly draw with a top prize of £20 plus special draws in July and December with a £50 top prize.



You don't need to be at the draw (held during PTA meetings) and you don't need to check your numbers – we send you a cheque if you win! If you'd like to buy a number (or two!) please email us at PTA@colneyheath.herts.sch.uk

With best wishes
Claire Oliver
Chair, Colney Heath School PTA

A NEAR MISS – a letter from Marko

As if we all have had enough to be getting on with these past months we are now threatened with winter flooding taking over the common.

The heath that gives our village its name (and provides our village its uniqueness) has been subjected to a lot of rain for the past few months. Many lockdown-walkers, horse riders, dog walkers et al., will be familiar with the splash-splash-splash of boot, paw or hoof engaging with the mud of a quagmire.

The lovely space that was a common has now become impassable and found unusable to many stakeholders at times : a resource that is not to be underestimated at this time of Lockdown and Covid, when people need to walk to promote wellbeing and a stable mental health.

Wellies sucked into almost a marsh land, rather than a heathland these past few months has meant many (including me) rejecting it as a prime site to walk on. The heath holds a special place in our hearts so I hope that we can attempt to work this out using the various agencies to make a plan to reduce the environmental impact all this water is bringing to our area.

The “new bridge” at Church Lane, provided after the last great flood of the 1980/90s, frankly was overwhelmed this year.

Water, evidenced, cutting its own path around the bridge and creating new conduits could lead to a potential loss of the bridge and millions of pounds of damage to peoples' homes. The 1980/90s plan by the environmental agency is now compromised.

It is not enough to simply shrug our collective shoulders and say we live on a flood plain. The river banks are overgrown, some areas of the heath (nearby the river) are subsiding, the river isn't being cleared of debris (up and down the river Colne). Frankly it is a mess. There needs to be more management of the river along our village – and then down to London Colney and beyond.

We need to examine those who have built up individual defences and pushed water away from their farms or workplaces that is clearly displacing the problem away from their immediate area - but has the probable causal impact of destroying our heath along with prime farmland, and dirty soiled water entering our homes. Let me add road drainage and paved, concrete house drives to the mix and we have a major problem that needs to be tackled together.

I hope that we can provide pressure on the environmental agencies and ask our Parish Council to exercise more responsibility regarding its riparian duty of care. In the meantime we must all hope that a dry spring will come to us very soon.

Marko 15/01/2021.



Photograph of the Heath © Marko 2021

TREES

In October last year “Marko Out” had posted on the Colney Heath Village Facebook that he dreamt of sitting along the High Street surrounded by colourful trees that would promote to others that people in Colney Heath care about their environment. This attracted several comments : Maria Lisa said “*what a beautiful idea, I would love to see this happen*”.

So, now enter David Attrill, resident in Bullens Green. David is passionate about the environment. He had been in contact with the Woodland Trust about The Big Climate Fight Back as he was interested in joining a group to plant trees for a cleaner future.

Due to the Covid restrictions the Woodland Trust advised they were not organising planting sessions but that “We’re encouraging communities to apply for our free tree packs and host their own tree planting days.”

In early December David posted on the Colney Heath Village Facebook with this news and received a number of enthusiastic responses from residents volunteering to help plant trees in the village. Where to plant was a question and landowner permission would be required. It was noted in comments that the “Common should be as tree-free as possible, and a fortune is spent trying to keep it that way”.

David now has more than 50 volunteers with a plan to plant trees in several locations in the Spring. He has been in touch with the Colney Heath Parish Council who advise that for insurance and other administrative reasons the Parish Council need to take over the project.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 17th December state

Tree Planting initiative March 2021

The Clerk spoke about a resident wishing to carry out a tree planting initiative with volunteer planters in March 2021. Council raised concerns about ongoing maintenance and costs including the location of the trees. Subject to agreement by the Environment Committee on planting locations, reviewing of ongoing maintenance, and successfully receiving trees the Woodland Trust initiative Council duly proposed, seconded and unanimously RESOLVED to proceed with ordering up to 200 trees for planting on Parish Council owned land in March 2021.

David thinks it would be reasonable for volunteers to offer half a day of their time. With set up time etc each volunteer may be able plant two (or possibly more) trees in a session so it may require a couple of sessions to get the planting done.

At the Parish Council Environment Committee meeting on 28th January 2021 it was noted that the Woodland Trust had suspended deliveries due to the pandemic and the Committee hoped to be able proceed in October. No sites had yet been identified but it was intended to plant fruit trees.

The Woodland Trust has planted over 43 million trees since it was established in 1972.

The Big Climate Fightback is a movement of people across the UK taking one or more actions to support the Woodland Trust’s goal to get 50 million more trees in the ground over the next 5 years. It builds on the momentum created during the Big Climate Fightback 2019.

Trees have a vital role in CO₂ reduction capturing and storing atmospheric carbon for centuries through photosynthesis which also releases oxygen into the atmosphere. This is about 30% of the supply of oxygen, the balance being released from the oceans.

Trees help prevent flooding, reduce the temperature in urban areas, reduce pollution, and keep soil nutrient-rich.

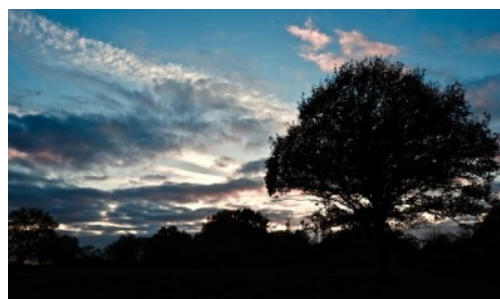


Photo on the Heath ©Marko 2021

And trees bring the joyful signs of new life and colour in Spring, calming shade for a picnic on a hot summer’s day, glorious gold and browns in Autumn, and shape to the horizon on a walk across the Heath in Winter.

The Woodland Trust’s goal is to inspire people to tackle climate change by helping to expand tree cover in the UK. It can be achieved by planting your own trees, supporting their campaign for government support for trees, or donating to their work. Use the following link for more information

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/protecting-trees-and-woods/campaign-with-us/big-climate-fightback/faqs/>

If you have not yet visited Heartwood Forest it is well worth a visit to see what has been achieved in just over ten years. It is located near Sandridge. Acquired by the Woodland Trust in 2008, most of the 347 hectares were oilseed rape fields with 18 hectares being ancient woodland.



WINTER SCENES



Before Christmas

Taking up the idea of the “living advent calendar” a number of houses decorated their windows and chose a date before Christmas Day. The other residents joining in the idea then visited after dusk to enjoy the creative works - a little treat.



Then in mid January the flooding of the Heath

Photographs © Marko 2021



Followed by snow in the last week of January

White Out Photograph © Marko 2021



Photograph of the Heath with the village hall on the left © Marko 2021

RAINBOW



A beautiful picture appeared on Colney Heath Village Facebook. This is the story behind it. Kayley sent this message to the editor on 3rd December

At the beginning of November we got the news that my grandad had been rushed into hospital with Covid-19. We were all so worried about him. Luckily I have my horses to go to, to get my mind off it all for a couple of hours. I went out for a ride and I got to the cornfields and a beautiful rainbow appeared. My mum, having my camera with her, managed to get a snap of that wonderful moment. It brings back happiness when we look back at it.

Sadly we lost my grandad 3 weeks ago on Tuesday. This picture is so special to our family as we hope it represents a positive outcome for the new Covid vaccine and for it to save so many lives. I know if he was to see this picture he would be so impressed and would love it.

Kayley is a local photographer. She does photoshoots locally for people's pets, mainly horses, but she loves to do other animals too.

<https://www.facebook.com/kayleyalexandraphotography-107151854340086>

IRIS' ART GROUP

The group returned to our weekly session in the village hall on Monday mornings in October, then had to retreat to “work from home” during the November lockdown, and then back again in the hall for a few sessions in December. We have a WhatsApp group to share how we are progressing, to usefully and gently crit each others work, and keep motivated. 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.



BB



IG



IG



JD



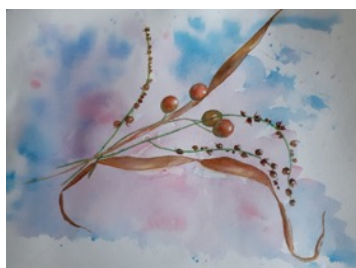
BB



JC



PC



PC



JB



JD



PR



BB