



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
Highfield Park Visitor Centre
Hill End Lane
St Albans
Hertfordshire AL4 0RA

Colney Heath Village Office
83 High Street
Colney Heath
Hertfordshire AL4 0NS

Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

CHPC Public Interest Statement

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

Parish Council Chair Cllr Cook said:-

“I am pleased that Council have now resolved to conclude this matter so that we can focus on the current needs of our electorate rather than previous misdeeds”

I believe the report highlights a disappointing decade of financial and process irregularities.

The challenge was brought to our knowledge from Autumn 2015 and then we had to wean the organisations off of what had become custom and practice and expectation over many years.

I would especially like to thank those Councillors who kept the focus on good governance and transparency of decision making, especially after involving Herts Constabulary in 2016 and the new fulltime Clerk for her extensive research to support the wide-reaching claim over the last few years”.

The Parish Council will decide how the £45,900.00 settlement is spent and allocated proportionately throughout the Parish. The report will be referred to at the Parish Annual Electorate meeting on 29 April 2021

19 April 2021
ENDS

* Ultra vires is a Latin phrase used in law to describe an act which requires legal authority but is done without it. Its opposite, an act done under proper authority, is intra vires. Acts that are intra vires may equivalently be termed "valid", and those that are ultra vires termed "invalid"



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A summary of actions taken by CHPC since September 2015

- 2015 Sep to Dec** interim Clerk highlights irregularities including Internal Audit reports sent to Late Clerk's house, never shown to Councillors
- 2016 28 Jan** meeting with Chief Inspector Townsend of Hertfordshire Constabulary
- 9 Sep** Detective Chief Inspector McCullough noted if the late Clerk were alive there would be serious questions to answer
- 2017** Zurich eventually agree to consider claim (a high bar)
- 2018/2019** Meetings with and information supplied to forensic investigator
- 2020** Negotiations with Zurich, without prejudice
- 2021** Settlement offer of £46,000.00 (less policy excess of £100)

Those who benefitted from the ultra vires* payments

Organisations/Individuals (in no particular order)

1. Smallford Residents Association
2. Scout and Guide Association
3. Charles Morris Hall
4. Treasure Tots
5. Neighbourhood Plan Project Manager
6. Colney Heath Village Hall
7. Colney Heath Football Club

Auditor

1. Auditing Solutions

Staff

1. **Former Clerk/RFO**
Self-employed consultant from 2003
Employed by the Parish Council from 2004 - 2015
2. **Former Deputy Clerk/Assistant Clerk**
Employed by Parish Council from 2003-2015



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ATTACHMENTS

Colney Heath Parish Council Public Interest Report

Resolution Full Council 25 March 2021 – draft minutes see Item 20/21-132a

List of serving Cllrs since 2004

A list the Councillors who served CHPC since 2004 and those in the Chair are highlighted in **Bold**.