

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

✉ **Address:** Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA
☎ **Telephone:** (01727) 825 314
💻 **Website:** <https://colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk>
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MINUTES OF THE 2022 ANNUAL COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL ELECTORATE MEETING HELD AT COLNEY HEATH JMI SCHOOL THURSDAY 26 MAY 2022, 7pm

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECLARATIONS

None received.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllrs Solts and Shaw

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021

Minutes from the last Annual Parish Electorate Meeting held 29 April 2021 were duly proposed, seconded and accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Good evening

As this is the first in person APEM for three years I will cover not only last year but also the period since the last Parish Elections

The 3 years have been challenging, especially the last two because of the pandemic

The new St Albans mayor is a Parish resident

District Councillors for Wards in which the Parish is in
Colney Heath Ward
Hill End Ward

It will interesting to see how the Council operates with 90% of Councillors from one party, and with so many inexperienced in how local government operates – similar to some what has been experienced over the last 3 years

Thanks go to Councillors, the Clerk, Finance Officer, Asst to Clerk and Common Ranger

Committees – [aim to be more efficient and focused]

[F&G/HR Environment See Annual Report]

Fidelity Claim outcome

A public reminder reconfirm that the misallocation and misappropriation of funds occurred over the decade between 2004 and 2015

Public Interest Report

Necessary to bring clarity to what had happened over that period - over £250,000 approved outside of the governance at the time with over £100k of petty cash – the vast majority without an audit trail

Last three years have had completely clean audits showing the clear governance of this administration

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Appears some people want to go back to the previous ways – Not on my watch

Voluntary Registration

Successfully at Recreation Ground and Tyttenhanger Accessway
Common in 2022 with over 80 adjoining titles

accreditation from NALC for the LCAS Foundation award

Planning

Not often made public but significant work goes on in the background by a small group with Mike Rawlins in particular

Extremely grateful to Mike Rawlins for all the work he does for the Council, especially in respect of the larger planning applications within the Parish and his valuable work in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It has become apparent over the past few years that whilst the rural part of the Parish is within the Green Belt we are not immune from developers obtaining planning permission to build.

However, it is also obvious that we live within a community which is passionate about protecting our current environment and amongst our parishioners are those with a wealth of experience and local knowledge who can and do provide valuable information to help with the submission of planning comments.

We hold meetings held on large planning applications and development with an officer present

Hertsmere Local Plan and objection to Bowmans Cross – where we collaborate with London Colney Parish Council to fight the merging of both communities
Urban and Civic the promoters acknowledged the professionalism of our submissions

Smallford Works Prevented 100 houses focusing on planning grounds

Bullens Green Lane As covered two Districts and Parishes led by Residents

Ellenbrook Quarry Rule 6 status obtained 11 August

- Clear strategy of objecting on planning grounds
- Collaborative working with SRA and other community groups
- Weekly Zoom meetings from end August to the Appeal in mid November
- Evening and weekend work by all the team

As commented on by experienced Councillors

you were 'professional amateurs which from our experience won you the Appeal

It was a shame this didn't happen on all the Inquiries in the Parish – contrasted with some of the amateur professionals

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Coming up

Fredericks Wood

Collaborative working with local residents

Housing

Tarmac 45 houses

And others in the pipeline from the Call for Sites process – both ours and St Albans

Over the past 3 years the Environment Committee have reviewed relevant reports and working with officers have ensured the play areas within the Parish are regularly inspected and works carried as and when is necessary.

We are grateful to those residents, as regular users, who notify us of any issues which may need to be addressed.

The Recreation Ground play area to the rear of Colney Heath Football Club has been removed due to age and we are currently seeking to put in replacement equipment in the Recreation Ground adjacent to the main pitch with easy access from the carpark and notably to include a piece of equipment designed for a disabled child.

Contributions for the funding of this play area will be a grant of £10,000, applied for by the Clerk, and awarded by the National Lottery Community Fund and £17,950 from the share of the Fidelity Funds allocated to Colney Heath Ward.

The Common is an important nature reserve within our community with its heathland habitat, one of the rarest in the county.

We would like to express our great thanks to the Common Ranger, Charlie Nash, for all his hard work which is very much appreciated. Charlie regularly walks the Common and highlights issues of concern including monitoring fallen tree trunks and other material in the river Colne.

The Common now has new by-law and interpretation boards on display which we hope provide useful information for those visiting and for the many dog walkers we have now provided two EcoStation dog poo bag dispensers sited alongside dog waste bins to encourage the collection of waste.

In 2021 the Clerk to the Council met with Heidi Carruthers, the People and Wildlife Officer of Herts Wildlife Trust to discuss the Wilder St Albans project and possible ways to increase biodiversity of the Common and the Warren.

Earlier this year, in March, we had the first Wilder St Albans Project session, organised by Heidi. She advertised for volunteers to join a conservation work party to spend a day helping to clear the encroaching hawthorn scrub from the Warren.

The Common requires regular maintenance and we really appreciate the volunteers who came to help and thank Heidi for providing the necessary equipment to carry out the task. It is hoped that other volunteering opportunities will be available later in the year. Heidi is also researching alternative sources of grazing livestock on the Warren as we no longer have the option of grazing cattle from Willows Farm.

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In addition, with the assistance of Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust we are seeking to update the Common Management Plan and hope to agree on a 'vision' for the Common within the coming months.

The Environment Committee were pleased to support a Colney Heath village resident, David Attrill, who had expressed a wish to plant trees in the village at the start of lockdown in 2020.

Council gave permission for about 200 saplings for hedging to be planted on Parish land in Roestock Park and the Recreation Ground. David sourced the saplings with stakes and spiral guards from the Woodland Trust at no cost to the Parish and earlier this year with support of volunteers from the Village organised the planting over a couple of weeks.

Some of the saplings were used at Roestock Park to fill in a gap, which had been created by some necessary tree maintenance work, between the park and the prospective housing development off Bullens Green Lane.

Community Engagement [doesn't mean agreement with]

Represent whole Parish of over 4,500 electorate

Neighbourhood Plan

Reintroduce and the importance of attempting to influence planning in the local area and community.

Cannot allow the lack of a Local Plan to stop the Neighbourhood Plan process

Collaborative working with community groups such as the football club

CHFC new lease

Entirely in public domain

relationship with CHFC on better footing, resolved OAS

Introduced in last 3 years New website, Newsletters

Surgeries

Over the past 3 years Council have sought to engage with parishioners via Zoom as lockdown prohibited meetings in person. Whilst some residents appeared on the earlier surgeries to express their concerns and engage in discussion with Councillors the more recent Zoom meetings failed to attract much interest and therefore it was decided to discontinue with this format. Council decided instead that future meetings with parishioners should be arranged on particular topics such as specific planning applications. However, if individual parishioners have any issues they wish to raise and/or discuss in person they can continue to contact their Ward Councillors or the Clerk by email.

Roestock Park

Subject to differences of views and allegations of Fake news and Fact checks

One fact to formally record is that the Scouts had advice from four different legal advisors. The Scouts CHOSE not to renew their lease

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Community Survey

After detailed discussion and at least three versions await the all Parish response

Challenges ahead for 2022/23

SADC Community Governance review decision pending

We started budget implication preparation in 2020/21 and has been refined last year

it will be for the next administration to manage that decision but for this administration to ensure plans are in place for any possible decision made

5. PARISH FINANCE 2021/22

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PARISHIONERS/ELECTORATE

There were no further questions. It was confirmed that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would take place on Thursday 5th May 2021.

Meeting ended at 7.22pm

Minutes for approval at the Annual Parish Electorate Meeting in May 2024