

the kite



Welcome to Spring!



As we welcome in Spring, we hope you will enjoy this third issue of The Kite created by volunteers working with the Communications Working Party. There's plenty of news including a lovely article about our new Parish icon, the majestic Red Kite, as well as an informative and personal piece on children with ADHD from Sleapshyde resident, Kirsty Higman.

We are a small Parish Council with a limited budget and your Councillors are all unpaid volunteers. Our work also depends on residents giving up their time to volunteer with us. As we set out in May 2023, we have a vision to serve the community with diligence and trust; we want to be a 'Good Council'. Already, certain unforeseen challenges have made our work more difficult and residents have questioned some of our decisions, particularly around finances. So let me clear up one of them here, namely the large cost of repairing the broken wooden bridge in Roestock Park children's playground.

The parish has four playgrounds. Constructing and maintaining them to the standards legally required is costly and demanding on the Council's budget. Any repair work undertaken needs to be guaranteed and requires insurance: as a result there are only a

few qualified providers available. Parents want playgrounds and equipment to be safe and it's the Parish Council's duty to make sure that this is the case. Sadly, the alternative is we lose them.

Finally can I say a huge thank you to everyone involved in the Planning Working Party led by Councillor Tony Burns. Although it continues to be stretched by demands on its time and skills, the work has proved – and is proving – vital to defending our Parish against the developers intent on building on swathes of Green Belt land. We must stand together against them – and we need more volunteers to help in the fight!

I hope you enjoy Spring and I extend my best wishes to you if you celebrate Easter.

Craig Craig Tallents, Chair

YOUR DIARY DATES

Parish Council meetings:

Thursdays 19th April and 16th May 2024 at 7.30pm at Colney Heath JMI School. Residents are always very welcome to attend.

- **Parish Council Annual Meeting with the electorate**
- Thursday 9th May at Colney Heath JMI School Hall at 7pm.
- A chance for residents to ask the Council questions!

- **Colney Heath FC Social Club presents the Amy Winehouse Tribute**
- on Friday 26th April 2024 at 8pm. Free entry (over 16s only).

We have to remain positive!

When we started this edition of The Kite it was led with the news we'd all been waiting for – Vistry Homes' plan to build new 150 houses on land behind Tollgate Road in Colney Heath, which had gone to appeal, had been refused by the Planning Inspector. The success was testament to the evidence submitted and presented by the Planning Working Party led by Councillor Tony Burns. The efforts of everyone involved must be applauded. Their time, commitment, dedication, knowledge and, above all, fighting spirit went a long way to taking on the might of a national developer and its army of lawyers. However, as we have recently been informed, Vistry have submitted a legal case for review, which will mean that the Inspector's refusal will now be heard in the High Court and may be overturned. If it is, the appeal process will start all over again! It puts a real downer on our celebrations, but we must remain positive and hope that our efforts will put this to bed once and for all.

Aside from the fight against Vistry, the Planning Working Party continues to be stretched with battles against other developers. It is currently preparing documentation to take into another inquiry against Tarmac who want to build 45 new homes next to Colney Heath football club. At the same time, preparations are also in hand for an expected appeal on the Ellenbrook quarry and responses have been made to the recent planning application on Colney Heath Lane for some 145 new homes. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been re-formed to develop the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish in parallel with the development of the Local Plan by the District Council. An approved Neighbourhood Plan will provide the Parish with both safeguards against inappropriate development

and opportunities to improve the Parish in line with community needs. We urgently need more volunteers to help the Planning Working Party with a range of tasks, so if you can spare some time, please email Councillor John Clemow at: cllrclemow@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Other matters...

The working parties set up in July last year continue to find solutions to the issues that were unresolved by the previous Council. The Roestock Park Hut working party is preparing a detailed analysis of options for bringing back the Roestock Park Hut (previously the Scout Hut) for community use. This is time consuming work which must meet the governance requirements for decision making and satisfying the Parish Council's auditor. Regarding Charles Morris Hall, investigations are in progress into the status of the Council's holding of the land gifted by Charles Morris. Meanwhile, we are awaiting advice from the charity trustees on their governance proposals. Solicitors acting for the Football Club and the Parish Council are progressing the heads of terms of the new lease.

ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE ELECTORATE

Thursday 9th May 2024 at 7pm
Colney Heath JMI School Hall
Everyone welcome!

The Parish Council will give a presentation on its work over the past year. Residents' questions will be heard and answered. Refreshments will be provided.

NOTE: To help giving answers at the meeting, questions should be emailed by 1st May to: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

HELP US FIGHT THE DEVELOPERS

Due to the increase in developments proposed in the Parish, the Parish Council is looking for residents who are knowledgeable and experienced in planning, building, sustainability and legal matters to help us respond to planning applications and appeals. If you are interested in helping us, then we'd love to hear from you! Please email Councillor John Clemow with your details: cllrclemow@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Do you have time on your hands that you'd like to use for the benefit of the Parish? Then we urgently need your help in planning matters.

Did anyone mention potholes?!

When we started this issue, top of the news list was going to be an article with some very choice words about the lack of repair works on Coursers Road in Colney Heath. For months (and we're talking well over 48 of them), Coursers Road has not been properly maintained by Highways; not only in terms of repairing the odd pot hole (and there's been plenty of them) but their claims that they are actually maintaining the road! Anyone driving along Coursers Road on a regular basis knows the terrible state it has been left to get into. However, in early March, Highways conducted some major repairs over a number of nights. The 'new' road surface may look like a patchwork quilt, but for the moment at least, many residents of Colney Heath can have the confidence to use it again, albeit with some caution because it is still far from perfect. Hopefully, the works will have made Highways aware of this and that regular maintenance is much needed.



Coursers Road © Nick Pettit 2024



© Nick Pettit 2024

A new children's playground for Colney Heath

Work on a new playground to replace the old one at the end of the car park between Colney Heath JMI School and the Football Club started on 13th March. The equipment will consist of a variety of items including an embankment slide, a swing, play tree and a digger! The work should take twelve weeks and unfortunately there will be some unavoidable disruption to use of the car park. The work is being undertaken by D. Honour & Son. The Parish Council received grants of £40,000 to augment the total building cost of £84,691.51.

Planting our future

We are very grateful to the Woodland Trust for giving more than 400 tree saplings to the Parish. On Thursday 14th March, Councillor Hilary Brazier and residents Derrick Crump and Sue Simmonds spent a very productive morning planting 295 trees and hedging in Roestock Park, Colney Heath. We've identified other sites in the Parish for the remaining saplings. If you want to help plant them, email: cllr Brazier@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Young footballers urgently needed

Following on from our December article on Harvesters FC, we were again contacted by Sam Jacobs asking if we could help with another push to find new young players for the Club. Harvesters has set its sights firmly on achieving big things in the 2024/25 season and is looking for both boys and girls across a wide range of age groups.

The Club has a deep love of football and a hunger for success. It promotes a positive attitude, a willingness to learn and above all, a passion for teamwork with a desire to contribute to the Club's collective success. Its facilities are second to none and the coaching staff consists of six UEFA qualified coaches who are committed to helping children on their journey to reaching full potential. So if you

have a budding young footballer in your family, specifically: Boys – Year 2s, U9s, U11s and U13 and Girls – U9, U13s, U14s and U15s, then please contact: newplayer@harvestersfc.co.uk



Harvesters FC © Nick Pettit 2024

Soaring over the Parish

Adopting the Red Kite as the symbol of the new Parish Council has been met very favourably by residents. We asked local bird expert, **Rupert Evershed** to cast some more light on these beautiful – and unmistakeable – birds. Photography by **Russell Dymott**.

Red Kites are those large, majestic birds of prey that circle lazily overhead and seem to hang in the air (like a kite), effortlessly surveying the land below for a tasty morsel. Distinguished from the similar Buzzards by their forked tails and russet plumage tones, they have become a familiar feature of much of our countryside and urban spaces, including St Albans and Colney Heath Parish.

You would be forgiven for thinking they are a recent addition to our flora and fauna and might, like me, be aware of a time not that long ago when seeing such a bird anywhere other than the remotest parts of Wales was unthinkable. Indeed, due to comprehensive persecution from landowners, gamekeepers, egg collectors and trophy hunters, by the late 1870s kites had become extinct as a breeding species in England and Scotland. Just a handful of breeding pairs clung on in Wales.



© Russell Dymott 2024



© Russell Dymott 2024

And yet, for hundreds of years prior to that, Red Kites were a familiar sight as one of the most common birds of prey in England. Their love of scavenging made them flock at open rubbish tips and Shakespeare described London as a “city of kites and crows”. He also noted their penchant for stealing washing hung out to dry to add to their nests. He advised: “When a kite builds, look to

lesser linen!” Sadly, their willingness to come close to man – the main source of their scavenged meals – made them easy targets as ‘the bad guys’ and even easier targets for shooting and poisoning.

That we now, once again, have Red Kites soaring overhead, dipping down on our fields and nesting in our valleys is thanks to the efforts of a handful of conservationists who masterminded a successful Red Kite reintroduction programme. This was no mean feat, requiring international cooperation, masses of paperwork, vet checks and licences, discussed and agreed (not always easily) at the highest level. The transfer of young Red Kites from Sweden required the use of an RAF Nimrod plane as well as long journeys overland until finally, in 1989, young Red Kites were ready to be released at a site in Scotland and in southern England.

Success was immediate with the released Red Kites establishing themselves and spreading far and wide. It was as if they had never left and a clear indicator that the only obstacle ever in their way was the relentless persecution by humans. The Red Kite reintroduction programme is now believed to be one of the most successful conservation projects ever undertaken.



© Smallford Station and Alban Way Heritage Society

Lights, camera, action!

Jeff Lewis, Chairman of the Smallford Station & Alban Way Heritage Society, sent in this interesting article on Smallford station as a follow-up to the piece we ran in the December edition.

The two grainy black and white photographs on the left are stills taken from a very old, black and white movie, called 'Rookery Nook'. It was made in 1930, only four years after the very first commercial sound movie was made and provides 'moving' evidence of a train arriving at Smallford Station!

'Rookery Nook' is referenced in Roger Taylor and Brian Anderson's excellent book, 'The Hatfield & St Albans Branch of the GNR', which members of the Heritage Society used to locate the film at the British Film Institute on London's Tottenham Court Road. The Society was able to make a copy of the clip which they have posted onto YouTube (it only lasts 48 seconds). In the film, Smallford station is named Chumley on Sea! To watch the film, simply search on YouTube for 'Rookery Nook'.

Diary dates ...

Monday 1st April: (Easter Monday) First Pop-Up Café of the year. 11.00am – 4.00pm.

Sunday 16th June: Second Pop-Up Café. 11.00am – 4.00pm.

COLNEY HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

French exchange time

It's been a busy few months for the Association. At our Christmas Dinner & Dance, we were entertained by the Jumping Fleas and in January new committee members were elected – Graeme Shaw (Chair), Alun Puddefoot (Vice chair), Lesley Lewis (Secretary) and Sue Rowland (Treasurer). Other members of the committee are Mary Bailie, John Clemow, Pam Fox, Judy Puddefoot and Flori Solomon.

In February, we had our Jumble Sale in Colney Heath Village Hall which proved more popular than ever. This is our main fund raising annual event and members of the public donated a huge number and variety of items, making it a great success.

Our annual exchange, 'le long-weekend', with our twinned French families is taking place from 17-20 May and this year the French are coming to Colney Heath. The Association is very grateful

for the grant of £600 awarded by the Parish Council which will contribute to the cost of a formal afternoon tea at St Michael's Manor in St Albans on Sunday 19th May with them.

Membership and the Association's events are open to all residents in the Parish. Contact Lesley Lewis at: lewislesley@hotmail.co.uk

colneyheathboissytwinningassociation.weebly.com



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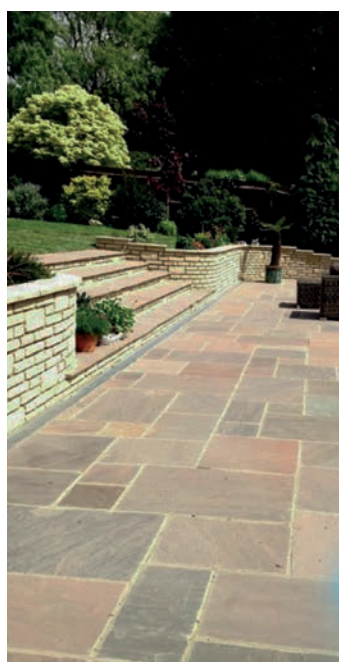
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Getting 2024 started

Colney Heath WI have enjoyed a busy start to the year. Our meeting in January had a speaker on brain injuries and how they affect women (yes, women and men do have different responses to brain injuries and of course, the majority of research is on men!). February saw our members practising Strictly Chair Yoga with much enthusiasm. Who would have thought of combining Strictly Come Dancing with yoga?

Members have also been hosting a range of events to keep everyone entertained, from a film night watching *The Greatest Ever Beer Run* to a delicious soup lunch to a fun cheese and wine evening. Our most recent event was a games night in Colney Heath Village Hall community room. Here, members played Newmarket, Cluedo, Connect 4 and Yahtzee. The odd glass of wine or two helped lubricate things, but may not have aided the scoring!

Finally, we are looking for a friendly teenager who'd like to earn some pocket money by helping set up and clear away the tables and chairs at our monthly meetings. If you are interested, contact colneyheathwi@gmail.com for more information.

Amanda Furlong



Images © WI 2024

Fancy seeing a West End Show?

Colney Heath Theatre Club is a non-profit making organisation which was been established for 17 years.

It provides a wonderful evening out with stress-free travel to the theatre from local pick-up points.

In February, the Club saw *The King and I* at the Dominion Theatre from front row seats! We've a number of forthcoming shows which you can book: 1st July, *ABBA Voyage*; 21st August *Hello Dolly* with Imelda Staunton; and 18th December *Only Fools and Horses*. If you are interested in booking tickets, please email Elizabeth Clarke at: colneyheaththeatreclub@yahoo.co.uk

COLNEY HEATH VILLAGE HALL

Continued investment

We are delighted to announce that Ju-Jitsu has returned on Sunday mornings in the main hall (9–10am for 6 to 12 year olds and 10am–midday for 13+ and adults). Our booking calendar shows that the Hall is getting very busy, although there is availability on Saturday afternoons and evenings for children's parties or family events. Book at: colneyheathvillagehall.com/enquire

The trustees continue to invest in improving facilities at the Village Hall. We have installed a large projection screen in the main hall and are looking for a group, or person, to put on occasional 'film nights' (or even matinees). This year, we plan to update the main hall with a lick of paint and some new artworks and to transform the front garden.

Our design removes the tall shrubs, surfacing the area with gravel, and planting four trees with clear stems to open up the view of the hall. We are looking for residents' suggestions for an emblem to mark the village centre. Suggestions welcome to secretarych.villagehall@gmail.com

CHVH Secretary



Projector screen © John Clemow 2024



© Colney Heath JMI School 2024

Fully booked!

At Colney Heath School, we love books! Reading is given a high priority to ensure pupils get a flying start in this vital skill. Daily reading lessons enable them to learn phonics – teaching the building blocks of sounds – and then we have sessions to explore a particular book in more depth. We want our children to be competent and really love reading. Recently, World Book Day gave us the opportunity for plenty of book-related fun, including a chance to decorate the classroom doors and our nursery children came into school to discover that a giant beanstalk had grown overnight as a result of them throwing some beans out of the window the day before!

Last year, we were fortunate to receive a grant from the County Council that enabled us to invest in books that celebrated diversity. We want every child to experience the opportunity to recognise themselves within a book. Reading enables them to understand other people and their world too. With this in mind, we regularly try to update our books to ensure we are offering children a wide range of literature. We are hugely grateful to all our volunteers who come to hear our children read. If you have some time and think you might be able to help our children improve their reading, please do get in touch. We would love to share our books with you.

Anne Clark, Head

THE SCOUTS

Beavering away

Since Christmas, we're delighted that the Scout group has grown! The Beavers have been doing the Book Badge. This involved everyone reading six books and designing a book cover. We also found out who everyone's favourite author is. At the moment, we are working on the Gardening Badge. We have sown lettuce seeds – they all came up, which was quite a success! As part of the badge, we talked about the changing seasons and what equipment you need for gardening – and we still have more seeds to sow!

We have also played lots of different types of games and learnt to skip. Better weather is on the way and we're looking forward to lighter nights so we can carry on with our outdoor activities.

The Cubs have also been busy. They had an archery evening, where some Scouters from Stevenage District came and set up targets and they used (as the children say) 'real' bows and arrows. The Cubs also made pancakes and enjoyed a craft evening.

They are currently working on a range of activity badges.

Scouts are still meeting at London Colney and joining in with their activities. Both Cubs and Scouts took part in the Annual Swimming Gala at Westminster Lodge in January, which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Pat Hall, Colney Heath Scouts



© Pat Hall 2024



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Your Voice is given over to a person connected to the Parish to speak on a subject that others might be interested in.

Here, **Kirsty Higman** speaks about getting the right help for children with ADHD, particularly when they start school or transition to secondary school.

Keep on fighting

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed at an early age and may become more noticeable when a child's circumstances change, such as when they start school. Most cases are diagnosed when the child is under 12 years old, but sometimes it can take longer to get a full diagnosis.

ADHD is not linked to intellect, however it can make it harder for children to concentrate, retain information or stay focused. There can be difficulties around hyperactivity, impulsivity or 'zoning out'. ADHD can also create difficulties with their emotional regulation and executive functions. They often struggle with working memory, learner anxiety, rejection sensitivity dysphoria, or unhelpful coping and avoidance strategies. At the same time, they can become deeply absorbed with learning about a specific subject or interest.

My youngest son Theo has ADHD. He's very articulate and has an incredible knowledge of history. As a result, he can often become anxious and overwhelmed. Finding a release for his tension is vital; thankfully he loves playing rugby so this really helps. My eldest son Ollie has dyslexia and Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD), but also shows signs of ADHD. He's incredibly practical; his coping outlet is attending Young Farmers, something he absolutely loves.

I have had to fight to get both boys the right care and support they need at school, especially with Ollie's transition to secondary school. It's absolutely crucial for their long term well-being. From experience I have learnt that it's vital to have good evidence and all the supporting documentation you can muster. It's exhausting and emotionally draining fighting for their needs, but rewarding when the school is understanding and prepared to help. I also discovered that children with SEN (Special Education Needs) can qualify for Disabled Living Allowance. The forms are lengthy and you need to be very thorough, but the additional money can make a noticeable difference. Don't be afraid to ask for school support and keep nagging people when you feel that things are taking too long to sort out. It certainly worked for me and I'm delighted to say that my boys are doing well and getting the additional support they deserve.

I'm very happy to help any parent who like me has children with ADHD and is struggling for school support or deciding which route to take. Feel free to email me at kirstyhall1578@gmail.com. I have also found that organisations such as ADD-vance, Angels Support Group, DSPL7 and SENDIASS Herts are brilliant when it comes to help and finding out more about ADHD and what we as parents can do to create the very best environments for our children.

If you want your voice to be heard, email Helen at: hlvaux.yahoo.co.uk

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Smallford incorporating Sleafshyde

Oaklands College: Works on the roof of the construction building at Oaklands College, should be completed by late March. The college has made an application to extend the closure of the current temporary footpaths beyond the end of March. However, the routes will only be closed to protect the safety of users and will remain open other times. By the week commencing 15th April, the UKPN sub-station installation works should be underway.

Quarry: Herts County Council have issued the reasons for refusing planning permission to Brett Aggregates for the quarrying of the Old Hatfield aerodrome. We believe that Brett will appeal.

Smallford Works Entrance

The 'new' entrance to Smallford Works continues to not be operational and therefore the claimed advantages of the scheme for improved road safety and reduced disturbance to nearby residents have not come to fruition. Also, the reason for the felling of a mature oak on public land during the installation of improved street lighting associated with the new entrance works is apparently unknown to authorities who gave permission for the scheme. Despite frequent chasing by local residents the 'improved' street lights installed have not been functioning since early August 2023.

And finally To stay in the loop, it would be really helpful if more residents could register their details with us at:

info@smallford.org

Steve Ross, Secretary SSRA

Are you being watched or being seen?

In '1984' by George Orwell, he writes, "It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you when you move: Big Brother is watching you." Since then, this slogan has come to describe a world that will resonate with most of us as we navigate a world of tech— phones, cameras, laptops and an Alexa device that knows our music habits better than our families do! Many of these digital developments are helpful, but I think there is a difference between feeling watched and being seen. The thought of being watched may provoke feelings of concern for many of us, or the fear of being criticised or judged. 'Being seen', however, might lead us to feel loved, wanted or noticed.

I think back to a time when I acted as a character in a stage play as a child and was asked to wear pyjamas. When my Mum and family arrived, my heart leaped as I knew that they had come to cheer me on. However, after the show a person from the audience who had noticed some dirt on my clothes, spent a long time telling me about it in an unkind and hurtful way. Being watched in this way makes us feel judged, whilst being seen makes us feel loved.

The Christian faith is one where we believe that there is a God who sees and loves you like a doting parent attending a school play. He is not watching to criticise your performance, but to love and to show support, even when you make a mistake! Psalm 139 is a perfect example to describe how much the Lord sees someone and knows all about their comings and goings. It says;

- 1 You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
- 2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar...

These words bring comfort to many of us as it demonstrates how God lovingly sees every detail of our lives. Importantly, it reminds us that God sees us and loves us.

Rev'd Caroline Keightley, Vicar

PS. Can I please share with you my delight in returning to the role of Vicar, post maternity leave. It's a joy to be part of a loving church and a welcoming community. If you do not know us yet, please join any of our Easter services or The Big Lunch event on 9th April. You'll receive a very warm welcome!

For details of our Easter services please visit the church website: stmarkscolneyheath.co.uk



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Colney Heath FC news

As we go into the final months of the 23/24 season, it's a good time to reflect on the progress of the senior teams to date, as well as identifying the goals that remain in order to allow us to set the club's intentions appropriately.

Our senior men's team sadly lost the Herts Senior Cup semi-final away to Berkhamsted FC in early March. The semi-final is the furthest the Magpies have reached in any season in this competition, and the team won many plaudits on the night for the way they battled and never gave up. The magical win at Hemel Hempstead was sadly not to be repeated, and our hosts won the tie 2-0. The Magpies currently sit in 10th place in the Spartan Premier League, having already surpassed last season's points tally. The character of the young squad is as exciting as any Colney Heath team of the last ten years, and while a play-off spot might not happen this campaign, a top five finish next season looks to be within our capability.

Our U23 Development team continue to pick up points against teams in the Herts Senior County League. The young side prove to be a test for most teams despite their greater experience on the pitch. Stand-out players from our U18 team who have thrived in the U23 squad this season are Ben Turville, Sam O'Hare, Francesco Tortora and Joe Warren. Jack McShane leads the goalscoring with ten goals while Josh Cross and Francesco Tortora are right behind on eight. Our U18 team has struggled to get fixtures played since the New Year due to poor weather, but last time out a fabulous 6-1 win at Harpenden Town U18s has set up a promising final few weeks of the season.



Men's goal celebration © Colney Heath FC 2024

After bowing out of the Women's FA Cup at the first hurdle, Colney Heath Ladies started their league campaign with wins over Watford Ladies Development and Hartham Utd in September. The team then played eight more league and cup fixtures between October and November, winning seven of them, scoring 32 goals and conceding none! Their first league defeat was at Stotfold Women in December, as well as an early exit from the League Cup, but the Magpies have found their form once again winning six of seven matches from the start of 2024. Mia Simmonds, our 17-year-old striker, is leading the goalscoring with sixteen in all competitions, and Cally Salter is just two behind. On 24th March the team will be playing in the Hertfordshire FA Trophy Final at Letchworth against Stevenage FC Development. Fingers crossed they will be bringing back the silverware!

Richard Smith, Chair, Colney Heath FC



Ladies First Team
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Keep in touch with Colney Heath Parish Council

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Call 01727 825 314 (mobile: 07484 520 070) **Email:** clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Write to: The Clerk to the Council, Colney Heath Parish Council, Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane, St Albans, AL4 0RA, Hertfordshire.

Public opening hours: The Parish Office is open Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm. Staff are part-time so please call before visiting as we want to ensure we are there to meet you.

To advertise in The Kite: email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk for availability

Submissions for the June issue of The Kite: By 14th June please to Helen Vaux at hvaux@yahoo.co.uk

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