

December 2016



NEWSLETTER



Thunderbirds get a special 'England call-up'.

Our U11 girls were special guests of 'England Netball' at the beginning of December, showcasing their skills at the England v Jamaica international match held at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry.

They were enlisted to demonstrate 'Hi 5' Netball to hundreds of fans as they gathered for the nail-biting conclusion of the Vitality International Netball series. In return, many of the girls, along with Head Coach Kelly McCormack, and team managers Gemma Cook and Katherine Stubbings, were gifted with free tickets to watch two of the world's greatest netballing nations battle it out. The only thing to burst the girls' bubble was to see England lose narrowly by 57 - 64. The girls were also inspired watching the new Wasps netball team beat an England U21 squad in a thrilling warm up match.

This invitation to the international fixture was a fitting reward for Thunderbirds as reigning Warwickshire Hi 5 champions and in recognition of club's proactive recruitment and training of primary aged girls.



***** CHAMPIONS *****

Congratulations to our U11A team for winning the Worcester Hi-5 League. Our girls won all nine of their matches, scoring an astonishing 172 goals and only conceding 12!

Some of the games were hard fought victories, and we must not forget that if it hadn't been for Megan netting the winning goal in the dying seconds of our first match, it may have been a different story!

Hi-5 netball is great for learning to play everywhere on the court and our girls certainly showed how adaptable they were, even in the positions they normally don't feel comfortable in.

They played competitively with a great team spirit, but most importantly, always did so with a smile on their face! Well done to everyone who played their part!

Left to Right:- Esme, Katharine Stubbing (Team Manager), Issy, Olivia, Holly, Lucy and Molly. We also salute Evie, Lexi, Lolita, Louise and Megan who were called up to play in the winning team.



Our U12A team also made the headlines in December with a resounding 15-nil victory against Rylands in the Worcester League Final.

This followed a convincing semi final performance two weeks earlier when they beat Worcester 20-10.

U12A Team Manager, Gemma Cook, is proud as punch of her team.

SAFEGUARDING:

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The welfare of our girls will always be of paramount importance to Thunderbirds. Recent news stories within the world of football sent shock waves through the country and increases our resolve to safeguard all members.

Our procedures were tested recently when after being dropped of by a parent for training, two of our youth players decided to head into town instead. Thankfully, no harm came to them, but it raised the issue of who is responsible once children have been dropped off.

Thunderbirds can only take responsibility for girls once they have entered the training hall. If a parent chooses to drop off in a car parks, they take that risk.

All juniors must be collected in person. Meanwhile older girls are welcome to stay inside the training venue should a parent be delayed.

Your support in this matter is very much appreciated.

Please note, with immediate effect, when the team manager asks for your daughter's availability for the next match, a deadline will be set for your reply . Be sure to check emails regularly. This will help enormously with team planning. THANK YOU !



Kelly's Christmas Message

What another great season! We have seen the club continue to grow in numbers and I'm pretty sure that we are now the largest junior netball club in Warwickshire. This season, it has been lovely to see so many new members at the club, and more importantly, it has been uplifting to see our existing members welcome these girls with open arms and make them feel at home.

As usual, I have been travelling all over the West Midlands to see all of our teams play. I cannot express enough, how proud I am to see each and every team build in confidence and ability each week.

I would like to mention the growing number of quality team managers and assistant coaches that we now have. These ladies not only organise their teams each week, but they are starting to form a strong team themselves, very often stepping in to help each other at the last minute.



There are so many happy faces at training and matches, and it's so rewarding to see girls from different schools forming new friendships - and in my experience these friendships will last a life time.

I have heard so many positive comments from our local community and I can confidently say that Stratford Thunderbirds are GO!

Kelly's Heroes & Players of the Season

I want to take this opportunity to highlight and celebrate the outstanding behaviour and sporting attitude of some of our girls.

Esther Jervis



Esther always takes our younger 'Thunderchicks' under her wing. She takes time out of her own training session to talk to these girls, not only about netball, but she always asks if they are happy.

She makes sure that they play their favourite positions and very often gives them some excellent playing tips. (A coach for the future!) If a younger player makes a mistake, Esther is quick to reassure them and put them at their ease.

Well Done Esther!!

Jas Williams



Everyone loves Jas! As a coach, I am very conscious that some girls are quieter than others and if there is ever a girl sat on her own, Jas will spot this and be the first one to sit next to her and start a full blown conversation. She will literally talk to everyone and doesn't restrict herself just to her team.

Jas also encourages others. You'll very often hear her call out praise to her fellow players in both match play and training. She is full of life and energy. It's great to see her bounding around at training with enthusiasm; its contagious and others then take her lead.

Well done Jas!

Olivia Seaman



This is Olivia's first full proper season with Thunderbirds. Once upon a time she'd arrive at training with her hands in her hoody, not really keen to 'run'. Now, she's a much valued member of her team who is more than happy to 'run' and works hard during training and matches.

I very often see her standing with a group of the younger players, engaging in conversation with them. At the Christmas training session, I did express to her how impressed I was that she knows everyone's name - to which she promptly went down the line and named every single player - even girls who had only joined the session the week before.

Well Done Liv!

LUCY HARGREAVES — THIS IS YOUR LIFE, BACK!

Earlier this month, Lucy Hargreaves announced that she is to stand down as Chair of Thunderbirds at the end of December. It is, therefore, a timely opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved during her remarkable tenure.

Since the summer of 2015, our club has grown from nothing to 146 members. It has developed strong links with four venues and trains three nights a week. We've achieved CAPS status, been nominated for 'West Midlands Club of the Year', been invited to the Ricoh Arena and been retweeted by 'England Netball'. £950 has been raised in sponsorship while a pool of volunteers have been trained to coach, manage teams, officiate, administer first aid and to safeguard our members. Thunderbirds has appeared in the local press, joined conversations with the Stratford Sports Forum, forged links with VASA and been invited to join the working party that is considering the future of the Stratford Recreation ground.

Lucy was always generous to share the credit for these achievements, but a significant amount would simply not have been realised, so quickly, without her professional leadership. Amusingly, she knew very little about netball when she first accepted the post; simply motivated by her daughter's love for the game, Lucy worked tirelessly to build a reputable and successful club. She only ever asked volunteers to do what was manageable and if you ever received a personal email from Lucy, you'll be familiar with the lengths she went to in accommodating each family's needs. In her own resignation letter she added, "*We've seen many girls grow in strength and confidence and acquire skills of real teamwork that will set them up for life not just for netball*".

As the committee comes to terms with having to live without Lucy, spirits were raised recently by a comment sent to them from parent, Katey Smith. "*What an amazing achievement! It's an absolute honour to be part of the Thunderbirds club and full respect to all the volunteers who already have such busy lives. Thunderbirds also brings families together and champions competitive sport for girls, giving them confidence and the power to be life's winners.*"

Thunderbirds will be forever in Lucy's debt but she passes the baton on knowing that the club is in great shape. The club thanks her, wholeheartedly, for her time, meticulous organisation and dedication. While she looks forward to having more time to pursue other interests, she can also consider herself considerably more knowledgeable about netball than she was 16 months ago!

NEW VOLUNTEER APPOINTMENTS

We welcome on board Ellie Davis who is taking up the reins on Sponsorship & Fundraising, while Lorna Hegenbarth will be responsible for arranging training venues for the Summer Term onwards.

The club is equally grateful to Alix Hay who has offered her expertise on website development and social media. Also joining the fold is Kizzy Galvin who will be representing Thunderbirds at the Stratford Sports Club plans for the Recreation Ground. Finally, Jenny Lomas will help with the coordination of volunteers.

Despite this progress, a need for more Team Managers remains. Recruitment of new members will have to be frozen until we can be assured of enough adults to lead players at fixtures and to support Kelly in training sessions. Absence of Team Managers also threatens our participation in the Coventry & Warwicks league.

Kelly is the first point of contact for any adults who might be interested in being trained for this vital role. The club also has a training budget for anyone seeking Level 1 or 2 coaching qualifications.

OTHER NEWS



The role of Chair will be shared temporarily by Ellen Lavery and Adrian Stubbings, in addition to their existing duties. Once job descriptions are finalised and new volunteers have settled into their roles, the committee will be seeking nominations for a new club Chairperson. All suggestions, comments or complaints should be channelled through our Secretary, Elaine Binks. All contacts on Page 5



Ellen Lavery has already despatched details of training sessions for next term. We start again week commencing 9th January. Please pay particular attention to the alternative training venues on dates when KES and Shoterly are not available.



Parents are politely reminded that training fees must be settled no later than two weeks into a new term. Failure to do so will result in exclusion from training and non-selection of your daughter for matches. This is in line with the club's escalation policy. (A copy can be viewed on our website).

USEFUL CONTACTS

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Thunderbirds website www.stratfordthunderbirds.com

BACS PAYMENT DETAILS

Using this method saves time and money for the club!

Thank you for your consideration.

Stratford Thunderbirds Bank Transfer Details:

Sort code 60-20-41 Account No 43812538





We wish you a
merry Christmas
and more goals
next year!

