



February 2019

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.stratfordthunderbirds.comTwitter [@stratfordbirds](https://twitter.com/stratfordbirds)

New Year, new home and new challenges!



For the first time in the club's short history, a Thunderbirds team have reached the finals of a National netball competition.

Congratulations to our U12A squad who ended 2018 with an undefeated passage through the ENG Netball Cup (Central region); a one day tournament contested by eight of the top clubs in central England.

On the way, they saw off Matrix from Oxford, Reckitts from Hull and Sutton Town. In a close final they faced familiar rivals, Parkside, but came away with heads high, a 5-3 victory and a shiny new trophy!

Out of 16 finalists, Thunderbirds are one of four teams seeded #1 ahead of the draw on Saturday (2nd February). The ENG (*Earned Not Given*) U12s Netball Cup National Finals take place at the Wycombe Leisure Centre, Buckinghamshire, on Saturday 2nd March. (4pm to 8pm)

It promises to be an entertaining and hard fought competition with England International and Benecos Mavericks captain, Sasha Corbin, presenting the prizes. The event will be live to watch online but if you fancy supporting our girls, tickets cost £8.50 via ENG website www.engsportsuk.co.uk/shop-1

Meanwhile, another successful team taking Thunderbirds into new territory, are the U14As (below). They were declared winners of the Warwickshire U14 County Cup in December.

Their campaign started back in October with a decisive 32-18 victory against Henley. In November they defeated Leamington 37-19 before overcoming Elmdon 36-24. Finally they silenced Lyndon with a resounding 51-8 score line. With one fixture still outstanding, the girls had already made it to the next level; the West Midland Regionals. Another first for Thunderbirds.

Coach, Molly Salmons, told the Stratford Herald, ***"Qualification for both the U12As and U14As is a true reflection of how hard these girls work, both on and off the court. I'm excited for both teams to experience the higher quality of netball which is ahead of them"***.

In the Regionals so far, U14As got off to a flying start, beating Newcastle Town 48-22, but this weekend Barr Beacon bought them back to earth with a 26-33 wake up call.





KELLY FORCED INTO LIMELIGHT WITH TOP COACH AWARD

Head Coach, Kelly McCormack, who prefers to be nurturing winners, found herself among them on 18th January when she received this year's award for Coach/ PE Teacher at the Stratford District Sports Award.



Kelly has been officially recognised for her passion to get girls playing competitive netball. Not only has she been the driving force in our club's extraordinary expansion, she has never been deterred by a league's rules limiting entry to just A & B teams; she will seek and find other opportunities for C, D and even E teams to have their shot at goal. She was also credited for the support she gives girls on the England Netball Pathway.



NEW HOME FOR STRATFORD THUNDERBIRDS

We have Kelly's formidable negotiation skills to thank for the next item of news.

After three years of expansion, clashes in demand for sports halls and travelling miles to get to alternative venues, we can finally call Stratford Girls Grammar School (SGGS) our home. With effect from 25th February, Thunderbirds will be training four nights a week at Shottery, which will be known hereafter as '**Stratford Thunderbirds Netball Centre of Excellence**'.

The club is immensely grateful to SGGS for putting all their eggs in Thunderbird's basket, though it regrets the upheaval this will cause other tenants who are looking for new spaces to rent.

This announcement not only guarantees our club indoor / outdoor training space (with free parking) when needed, it will save our volunteers hours in administration, invoicing and venue searching. It has also provided our coaches and Club Manager with a chance to re-structure the training groups, more appropriately, in line with age and ability.

Thunderbirds intends to hold onto its sessions at the Croft (for our youngest members) and Meon Vale, which will provide extra scope to absorb new members. This has been made all the more possible by Molly achieving her Level 2 Coaching qualification.

Kelly, Molly and the Executive committee appreciate that players and parents have been inconvenienced by this rescheduling of training nights and venues. It is not the first time and will certainly not be the last time this happens. Please have faith in our coaches, that it is done for the development of all our girls and will pay dividends at forthcoming league fixtures and tournaments. Thank you all for making the adjustments.

NEW VENUE FOR BIRMINGHAM INTERMEDIATE NETBALL LEAGUE (BINL)

Yes, its all change for the Birmingham League too. Stockland Green may have been a convenient destination just off Spaghetti Junction, but the BINL organisers have been going round in circles for years, frustrated with the poor quality of the courts and risk to safety. Drastic measures have been taken with a move to new premises, namely, the University of Birmingham.

For the pleasure of playing at award winning outdoor facilities, you will need to factor a longer commute to central Birmingham.

The pre-season matches are this Sunday 3rd February. These will determine which teams plays in which division, so a good turn out is called for. League fixtures will start soon after.



New Address: University of Birmingham, Bristol Road, B15 2TT Parking and Starbucks available



THUNDERBIRDS KIT: A NEW POINT OF ORDER

The bad news is that all purchases of Thunderbirds kit have been temporarily suspended. The good news is that a new supplier of bespoke club sports wear has been found and a fresh, improved service will be up and running very soon.

Our original supplier has been fantastic for delivering quality sports wear at reasonable prices. Sadly, after years of trying, they have been unable to deliver on a promise to put kit orders online. With membership expanding 300% in three years and girls continuously outgrowing their items, it has proven to be too much of a burden for our Kit Secretary, Sarah Saffet-Cole, to handle manually, not to mention all the invoicing it has generated for our Treasurer, Adrian.

Sarah, Kelly and Molly have tirelessly shopped around for a new supplier, capable of matching the quality, providing additional items and most importantly, geared up for handling payments online and delivering direct. There may be some subtle changes to the detail of dress designs, for example, but nothing that need concern us. As soon as contracts have been signed and prices agreed, you will be advised of their name and website details for future orders. All outstanding orders, exchanges and replacements will be honoured. Thank you for your patience if your recent orders have been affected.

The club would like to grab this opportunity to thank Sarah for all the time and effort she has spent since September 2015, meeting such extraordinary demand for netball kit. No doubt, she will enjoy having her life and home back. Hopes for the future include setting up a second hand netball dress exchange.

WHO IS THE RESPONSIBLE ADULT?

At a recent Team Managers meeting, concerns were raised about parents asking friends to take daughters to matches but not making it known to the TMs who will take responsibility for them in the event of an injury or sudden disappearance.

While carpooling is an enormous benefit to most of us, as a club, we cannot take chances with our girls' safety or welfare.

When confirming availability for fixtures, can parents please let your TM known if your daughter will be in the care of another adult. Thank you



HAVING THE RIGHT 'APP'TITUDE

When it comes to technology, Kelly looks up to Molly who has played a 'blinder' both researching and setting Thunderbirds up on the new 'Team Stuff' app.

This tool will revolutionise how we communicate selections, logistics, cancellations and news updates. It also provides us with a safe databank for your child's contacts and medical details, accessible to only those who have your consent to use them.

Thank you to the vast majority of parents who have embraced it, familiarised themselves and added their daughter's details.

Remember, attendance at training does influence team selection. Please get into the habit of using the app to confirm attendance or explain absence. Molly and Kelly are always forgiving of a good excuse!

VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

TREASURER: After three years of sterling service in the post of treasurer, Adrian Stubbings needs to stand down this summer. Thunderbirds is therefore making an early call out to a parent who may have professional experience in accountancy/ book-keeping. Rest assured, Adrian has kept the house in excellent order and employed 'Quickbooks' software to make invoicing easier. With kit orders soon to go online with a third party, the workload should be eased further. If you feel you could help, would like to learn more and take advantage of a generous hand over period, please send an email to info@stratfordthunderbirds.com

UMPIRE COORDINATOR (REDDITCH LEAGUE) We could use extra help, using both tried and tested contacts plus more trainee umpires in the pipeline. Once again email info@stratfordthunderbirds.com