

On the afternoon of the 20th November last year my lovely 15-year-old daughter Holly Elouise Clacy took her own life at the top of Radar Hill in South Woodham Ferrers.

So many people were out looking for Holly that night and yet unbelievably, I was the one that found her on the hill. My screams for help resulted in a man with his dog rushing to my aid and coincidentally a colleague of mine, Andy Hunneybell, arrived to help too. There were so many people out looking for Holly that night and some of Holly's school friends arrived and saw her lifeless body on the hill and I know Holly would never have wanted that. The police and ambulances arrived in droves so quickly to help that my family can't thank them enough for their rapid response. However, all their efforts were in vain and she was pronounced dead at the scene and they allowed me to help carry her down to the ambulance. Since that day, that changed our family's life forever, we have continued to ask questions that will never be answered, and that seems to be one of the heavy burdens we will carry for the rest of our lives.

Tributes for our beautiful, happy daughter started to flood in immediately her death was confirmed; and they came in the form of flowers, laid at William de Ferrers school, and also on social media. I can't go into detail about all the messages we had in cards, as well as social media, as there were so many. All I can say is that we were touched by them all, and it buoyed us greatly knowing so many people were touched by the terrible event. Some enterprising people started making and selling pink bows (which have since become synonymous with Holly) to help raise money for her funeral costs. A giving page was set up and car stickers were made and sold, donations were taken at shops and in Holly's school at William de Ferrers and so much more that again, I cannot list them all or give praise enough.

I put out a request on social media and invited the people of our town to help us carry up the floral tributes they'd given. On Sunday the 26th November around two hundred or so people met us on the bypass and everyone carried something. As my family led the way and we reached the tree, we put the flowers down and everyone followed suit and laid the flowers they'd carried alongside ours. I turned and saw a continuous queue of people from Holly's tree all the way back down to the road. That is a vision that will stay with me forever and I will never forget you all for that moving sight. I read a few words that I'd written for the occasion and so many of those that came, stood silent and listened. The idea was to bring light to a sad little area and I feel that was achieved on that bright sunny morning. As everyone was leaving, a lady introduced herself to me as Sue Colvill, and asked if she could help by setting up a raffle and fund for our daughter. I gave her permission to do so.

Holly's funeral was held on the 12th December 2017 which was her 16th birthday and again the number of people that attended was inspiring and a tribute to our daughter. The funeral was perfectly arranged by Paul King and the ceremony was beautifully put together and the sermon by Reverend Carol Ball was caring, sensitive and fitting.

As the days have become weeks and time continues to move in one direction only, it does help to cope with the loss but obviously will never erase the pain completely. In that time, I have come to view life differently now and realised that some of the factors that may have influenced Holly's final decision were due to social media, mobile phones, stress in the education system, exams and also ineffective communication with those that can help ease

the stress they feel. This becomes a topic of conversation I have with strangers and everyone agrees that our story is relevant to them and relates directly to those young ones in their own families.

As 2018 arrived, Sue Colvill had been working tirelessly in bringing The Holly Clacy foundation to life and the first raffle was held at the Oakland Hotel on the 27th January and was very well attended and over £8,000 has been raised so far. The intention is to spend some money to make two oak benches to be placed up the hill, for people to rest on and enjoy the view; to help relieve stress in children by setting up and trialling workshops in this town, and to get children to communicate more effectively. Finally, I have an idea to help reduce bullying and unwelcome comments via mobile phones.

So many names of so many people to thank and give praise to, and most I have not even began to get in touch with. Whether you helped search on the night, were part of the emergency services, sold tickets, bought tickets, donated money, carried or gave flowers or even just wrote something about her then we thank you for your support. By your actions you have proved that this community has spirit, love and a caring attitude, and if the world were filled with people like you it would be a happier and brighter place to live.

Thank you all.

David Clacy