

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

Well, an interesting year – or should I say half-year. As my first year as Chairman, it has been a challenging one to say the least. Pete is a hard act to follow, and we are extremely grateful for his commitment to the Association over the last 20 odd years, but fortunately for us he is staying on the Committee in the role of Secretary. I am hoping that, together with my Vice Chairman Michael Chilvers, I can make a reasonable job of serving the residents for the next year. We also 'lost' another long-standing member of the Committee – John Fowler – who has also given many years to the committee, arranging the very popular and successful Progressive Suppers for all of us, and trying tirelessly to get our Village Green status – still to be acknowledged – amongst other things. However, we have 'gained' a new member of the Committee – Chris Mullord – who has brought some new ideas and helpful suggestions to our subsequent meetings. He and his wife Rosie have since become first-time parents to baby Sophie Ella in March of this year. Congratulations to you both.

The last AGM prompted a discussion about the issue of excessive levels of noise from the Lido, and we decided to invite residents to fill out a questionnaire regarding their thoughts about this. Only a small number responded to the survey sent out and they were asked to keep a diary of the noisiest times. The Lido have now endeavoured to reduce the noise level and there has been some improvement.

There was a problem with an influx of Travellers on the Rye which was disturbing, and resulted in discussions with our local MP – Steve Baker – and our Councillor - Julia Wassell. This was eventually resolved with the Travellers moving off, and subsequent legislation being put in place to prevent further invasions on to public places.

From June 2019 we managed to have a few events which were namely:

The Hall Barn Shakespeare company performing 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. This was attended well by 12 couples, and we enjoyed a lovely picnic in the grounds of Hall Barn before going into the 'theatre' to watch the play.

Next there was the Rebellion Brewery weekend which is held every other year. A minibus took the thirsty beer drinkers to indulge in free beer and live music and BBQ food.

July also brought the Annual BBQ on the Green with about 60 people attending. Live music was provided by Halvar again and luckily the weather was fair for us.

In September, there was a trip to the Swan to see the Rocky Horror Show, and was thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended.

September also brought a Bat Walk around the Dyke, arranged by Pete, and of course the annual Progressive Supper – which with great trepidation this year was my responsibility. Fortunately it went very well and was attended by 13 couples, many dressed to impress in Black Tie and fancy frocks.

A Bridge Club has now been set up following popular request, and several members of the WWRA are enjoying games, set up by Graham Keens. We also have set up an outdoor games hiring scheme, where any resident can hire out giant Jenga, giant Connect 4, and suchlike.

Halloween arrived and several local children (with their parents) walked around the estate Trick or Treating.

Carol Singing this year was in aid of Wycombe Homeless Connection and was attended by about 25 residents. Mulled wine was provided by Pete in his car port, and the donations collected amounted to £178. A new record.

The calendar year ended once again with Fireworks on the Green orchestrated by Michael Chilvers, and about 30 of us all brought our Champagne along to toast the new year. (If only we had known!)

Throughout the year, Pete Edwards has led several litter picks around the immediate area, and together with several other residents supplied with buckets and litter-pickers, has collected numerous bags of rubbish.

So to 2020! We have had several new arrivals to the estate in the past few months, and all have been welcomed with wine and welcome packs. Sadly though, two of our long-standing residents have passed away; John Croft - who was on the original WWRA Committee many years ago - and also Peter Fairey. Our condolences go to their families.

Event-wise, it started so well, with a Wine Tasting event in February which was attended by around 20 people and hosted by Graham Keens. Our local resident wine expert – Derrick Carr – gave us some excellent information on New Zealand white wines and Australian Red wines. Then in March, (just before the lock-down), there was a walk around the area surrounding Hughenden Manor followed by tea in the café, organized by Ivan Cicin-sain. Bad weather prevented many people from joining in unfortunately.

And thus it ended!

On the 16th March 2020, it was announced that the Country – in fact The World – was in a pandemic of a Coronavirus, Covid 19. On 19th March 2020, the WWRA Committee held an urgent meeting to discuss how we could serve our residents with help and guidance through what was to become a major lockdown.

A Covid Guidance note was sent out to all residents and also a Neighbourhood Watch guidance note. Requests for a volunteer help group produced an excellent community response from nearly 30 residents, who came forward to offer their services – many of whom were not active members. Several WhatsApp groups were set up and various Zoom meetings were arranged for both volunteers and residents. A log was created of vulnerable residents, and an emergency telephone helpline was set up for those who were self-isolating and required shopping, medical supplies etc. We organized Telephone and Email Managers, Shoppers, Runners, Technical Advisers, and general Helpers.

After the initial support system was up and running, we concentrated a bit more on keeping up morale across the estate. A daily 'Coffee Morning' on Zoom was arranged whereby anyone could drop in during the day and have a chat with others, and this has proved immensely popular. Pete Edwards has been sending out a daily Newsletter with general updates and lots of wildlife news with pictures and videos, and also a regular appropriate song, and Sharon organized a 'Linkee' quiz night on Zoom which was attended by about 10 couples – great fun. More to follow soon.

At Easter, we had a competition for children to either build a nest in their garden or make a chalk drawing on their drive, and send in photos which the Committee judged. Winners included William and Jude Phillips, and Matthew and Lucy Russell. Each was awarded with a Chocolate Bunny – left at social distancing on their doormat!

We even managed to organize a virtual VE Day celebration with an open Zoom where residents could drop in and show everyone how they were celebrating. There was a Competition for the best decorated house, and a virtual raffle where all the house numbers were put in a hat and drawn out on Zoom, and the winners each received a 'Red Cross Parcel' hamper which included chocolate, sugar, jam, tea, oranges etc. to represent wartime rations. Several residents got together in their driveways using social distancing, and all in all it was a great success.

I would like to personally thank those of you who have gone the extra mile in these difficult times and especially to:-

Sharon for her ongoing research and organizational skills, not to mention the setting up of Zoom events etc.

Pete, for keeping the residents entertained, plus his valuable input to the whole support system

Barbara Barlow, for keeping us informed on Shopping slots etc.

Stuart Jones, Inder Brar, and Mark Dunn for their technical expertise

I'd also like to thank Michael Chilvers for his support and loyalty to myself as my Vice Chairman, and all our Committee members who have worked together as a team to provide a unique task force in these extraordinary times. You should be proud of yourselves.

It also goes without saying that we are extremely grateful to all those other volunteers who have come forward in our hour of need, and we hope that you will continue to be active members of our Association in future. So a big thank you to you all too.

We would usually ask for a show of hands to confirm that you are all happy with the present Committee members, but as this is not possible, we would just like to say that we have no plans to change the Committee at the moment, and unless anyone has any objections, or indeed would like to nominate somebody to join us, we hereby declare that the current situation will remain for another year.

It is also normally now the time to ask for questions from the floor, but once again this is not possible. So if anybody has any queries they would like to put forward, or has any ideas for possible future events etc., please contact any one of us via email.

Thank you all for listening, and please, keep safe everyone, and let us all hope that this time next year the events of this one will be a distant memory.

Celia Darrington
Chairman WWRA