



# LITTLE CHALFONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**15 April 2021**

### **Chairman's Report**

#### **Introduction**

As we were unable to hold an Annual General Meeting in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, my report will cover our activities for the two years ending 31 December 2019 and 31 December 2020.

#### **Headlines – 2019**

- Another successful Village Day, superbly organised this time by our new Treasurer, Mari McLoughlin.
- Maintained our excellent display of hanging baskets, supplied by Simon Collins.
- Successfully completed phase 3 of refreshing the Christmas lights (including some of the infrastructure) with both GE Healthcare and Simco Homes playing their part.
- Published our usual half-yearly newsletters and, with the help of our volunteers, delivered these, as well as two newsletters by the Parish Council and other leaflets, to every house, flat, business and school, throughout the village.
- Continued to play our part in the Management Group of the Nature Park, as an active stakeholder.
- Formed Little Chalfont Good Neighbours to encourage the creation of more road associations and Neighbourhood Watch. (Operating under the umbrella of the LCCA and supported by the Parish Council.)
- Continued to liaise with all our voluntary organisations, uniformed groups, schools and churches, also keep them informed of grant funding opportunities.
- Maintained our active involvement with the Coordination Group for the Local Plan and saw the Chiltern and South Bucks Plan, including 'up to 700 homes' on the land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane (identified now as SP BP6), being signed off by the councils and placed in the hand of Planning Inspectors for a Public Examination.

- Acting as banker for the fund created to fight for our Local Plan objections, calling in the pledges made earlier by residents.
- Achieved agreement of GE Healthcare for the weekend use of its Amersham Place front car park during the daytime.

Overall a year of achievement but little did we know that 2020 would bring additional challenges – and not only the coronavirus pandemic!

### **Summary – 2020**

Despite the lockdowns, Tier 4 and other regulations, most of our core activities were continued and we have even been able to add to our involvements, albeit by all our meetings being held virtually, like everyone else. On a positive note:

- We did not have to find time to attend the Examination in Public for the Local Plan, as such gatherings were not allowed and, of course, the new Unitary Council withdrew the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan during the year.
- Cytiva Plc took over from GE Healthcare in Amersham Place and, not only have we been able to establish a very good relationship with the company we were able to reach agreement for the front car park to be available for the community to use on a daily basis. This is without any charge, although parking is limited to two hours between 8am and 6 pm. The company expects this facility to be available while its staff are working from home.
- The refreshment programme for the Christmas lights was extended into a fourth year to enable us to organise and pay for underground cabling for the lights on the Chenies Parade verge and add lights to two more of the trees.
- As part of the Community Action Plan item to create a Nature Friendly Village, four wildflower patches have been created in the village. (These were organised and personally created by Sian Lloyd who had been co-opted on to the committee.) The costs have been shared with the Parish Council.
- An update of our Community Information Directory has been completed.

but on a less positive note:

- To keep everyone safe, there was no option but to cancel our Village Day.
- Due to other commitments, our Village Day organiser, Mari McLoughlin stepped down and looking forward, we are still seeking someone to replace her.
- Other projects, either in hand or being considered had to be put onto the back burner.

As to the extra challenges, these of course came with the pandemic and also from the creation of the Amersham Community Board.

### Little Chalfont Good Neighbours

The long term objectives of the group were put on one side and the team, headed by Helen Tyers and Tony O’Sullivan, turned its attention to becoming a source of help to the community. It also partnered up with the Little Chalfont Coronavirus Facebook Help group, so that together, most if not all of the village was covered. We thank all the members who volunteered their help, whether responding to calls or, indeed, offering help in their own neighbourhood.

The team took on the publishing of leaflets that we delivered throughout the village, alongside the quarterly newsletters. The content was designed to both keep the community informed but to encourage the provision of support via immediate neighbours and road groups. The underlying aim was to try and ensure that no-one in need of help 'slipped through the net' for want of assistance. It is believed that this aim was broadly achieved.

Towards the end of the year, help was also offered to Catherine Kunzig Murphy and Jules Hargreaves to promote support from the community for the Chiltern Foodbank Christmas Appeal. The community responded magnificently and has continued to do so into 2021, as the demand for food parcels has doubled.

The team and volunteers remain ready to respond when help is sought but the team is now looking at other ways in which it can offer support, as we gradually get on top of the coronavirus.

### Amersham Community Board

Creation of the community board structure as part of the new Unitary Authority began to be established in the second half of the year. For the boards to succeed in getting closer to communities and their needs, engagement by local organisations, such as the Community Association, in addition to parish and town councils, is essential.

Each of the working groups which have been set up to develop responses to the agreed priorities for our board area, has representatives from the Community Association and/or our parish council. This had added the need to commit more time on a regular basis but it enables us to influence decisions and, ultimately, generate benefits for Little Chalfont.

I will not go into all the detail in this report but regular updates will be provided in future newsletters. The latest update is included in the parish council's newsletter which will be delivered a few days following our AGM.

### **Committee**

The committee numbers have remained low but, despite this, we have collectively done everything possible to maintain all our activities. I am personally indebted to each and every one of the team for their help and support and, on your behalf too, I thank them profusely.

We are, however, at a crossroads and unless we can boost the numbers, the review of what we take on (touched on in earlier reports) has now become inevitable. Also, some of the committee will be looking to step down soon, so fresh blood is also an important factor and I ask each and every one of you to help us fill the vacant roles. (The current situation is set out in the AGM notice.)

Of particular importance is the essential need to find a new Treasurer. Due especially to pressures of work, Mari McLoughlin was unable to continue her committee role and all our efforts to date to find someone to fill this key position have been unsuccessful. Mari has very generously agreed to continue to look after our bookkeeping until we find a replacement and we are most grateful to her, as without this service, we would be in difficulties. Thank you Mari.

## **Finances**

I have little to add to the reports from the Treasurer, other than to say that our financial situation is stable. We need to continue to be mindful that the annual grants that we currently receive from Buckinghamshire Council for our revitalisation work and from GE Healthcare may not always be available and, therefore, the benefit that is now showing through from the increased subscription needs also to be used to build a buffer of unrestricted reserves.

## **Membership**

Since the Association increased the annual subscription a couple of years ago, unsurprisingly there has been a reduced take up of renewals. To an extent, there is some disappointment as, despite reminders, there were many names that we would have expected to renew; maybe it is not clear to some, what benefits they enjoy as members that they would not receive ordinarily.

The pandemic has also stopped the opportunity to encourage new members to join but, hopefully, we will be able to have a membership drive, once we are back to a life without restrictions and our economy recovers.

Adrian Lockyer, as Membership Secretary, goes way beyond what is expected in keeping our membership together, on top of which he produces our newsletter and arranges its delivery with the help of our excellent volunteers. Many thanks Adrian – we would be lost without you.

During 2020, we lost Robertsons the Butcher from Chenies Parade after almost 60 years. The business has been a great supporter of the community and held honorary membership. However, on his retirement, the committee were pleased to recognise Tom's personal contribution and transfer the honorary status into his own name.

## **Voluntary Organisations and Schools**

We recognise that the strength of any community comes from its voluntary groups, be they special interest groups, uniform groups, schools, churches or sports clubs. We are proud to have them all as members and endeavour to assist them as needs arise.

Shirley Strange is our liaison committee member and does a great job in keeping them in the picture and ensuring that each one feels that they play an important part in the success of our community.

In addition, Shirley keeps our Community Information Directory up-to-date and is our representative on the Nature Park Management Group. My thanks to her for all that she achieves on our behalf.

## **Parish Council**

As the current term of the parish council is drawing to a close and there will be several changes in councillors after the 6 May elections, I want to recognise in this report, the value of having a good relationship with the councillors and, indeed the parish clerks.

While still maintaining our independence, we have continued, as we always have, to work as closely as possible with the parish council as, together, more is achieved than would otherwise be the case, particularly when projects are being considered.

This is partly achieved by a councillor attending our committee meetings as a representative and Michael Parker has filled this role for some years. He is not standing again at the elections and on behalf of the committee, I thank him for his involvement and extend our best wishes for the future.

The council is also losing Brian Drew after 14 years on the council. Before the council, he was actively involve with both the Village Society and the Little Chalfont Revitalisation Group (the predecessor organisations to the Community Association) and has achieved so much for our community. On behalf of the committee, past and present, and on behalf of the whole membership, I extend our very grateful thanks and wish him well in enjoying his second retirement!

### **Looking Forward**

There will be plenty to do in the rest of 2021 and beyond, over and above what might be described as all of our core activities. In particular:

- The Buckinghamshire Council's Planning Policy team is already beginning to address the Buckinghamshire Local Plan and the Local Plan Coordination group (of which we are still a part) has started to meet again and has already submitted responses to consultations. We may be some months away from new evidence documents being produced for comment and, indeed, a year or so before plan proposals are published but it is hoped that there will be opportunities to press for the land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane to be excluded.
- It is also clear that there will be projects to address from the outcome of the discussions in the Amersham Community Board's Working Groups. Three areas in particular have plans being developed and these are:
  - Coronavirus recovery
  - Village and town centre revival
  - Climate change and air pollution.

The (new) parish council will be involved but the ability to play our part may well depend on more people offering assistance, whether within the committee or alongside, it and the outcome of the planned review.

### **Closing thoughts**

All of us who are actively involved and indeed former committee members, take great satisfaction from everything that we have been able to achieve – the most successful being the creation of the Nature Park, where the Community Association was responsible for both its instigation and implementation.

None of it would have been possible without the continued support of you, our members, and I thank you all on behalf of the committee.

We clearly have reached a challenging point in our existence but all challenges can be overcome and perhaps will your help, this will be the year that the corner can be turned.

*Roger Funk*

Chairman

24 March 2021