



LITTLE CHALFONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

20 March 2019

Introduction and Overview

I am pleased to present my report for our year ended 31 December 2018.

Although again a challenging year, this proved not to be due to the Chiltern and South Bucks Emerging Local Plan as we had anticipated, but to the efforts put in to maintaining those activities which we considered to be important, with several of our committee roles remaining unfilled.

The highlights of the year included:

- The increase of the member subscription to £10 p.a., approved at last year's AGM, helping to secure our future financial position.
- The agreement of Paul Nicholls to organise a fourth Village Day – again a great success – coupled with Hywel Thomas's willingness to organising the Charity Fun Run.
- Delivering phase 2 of the programme to both refresh our Christmas lights and upgrade the infrastructure. This would not have been possible without the contributions from The Entertainer, the developers of Chenies Mews (at the end of Chenies Parade) and GE Healthcare or, indeed, without the help provided by Rebecca Cargill and Lisa Stockdale.
- Meeting our aspiration to be in a position to provide financial help in the form of grants to local clubs and voluntary organisations.
- Maintaining a reasonable level of communication on matters of interest to the membership, including our 6 monthly newsletter.
- Finalisation of the revised Community Improvement Plan.
- The dedication of the committee members who pulled together to ensure that our objectives were achieved.

Committee

From a personal perspective and on behalf of the membership, I extend my profound thanks for the support of all the committee members and for everything that they achieved in 2018.

In September, Lisa Horne felt it necessary to step down as Secretary due to family and other commitments. She joined the committee in 2014 and we sorely miss her

practical approach. Our grateful thanks to her for all her input. (We are still without a Secretary but are hopeful that, with the help of the membership, another secretary will step forward to fill the role.)

Ted Cooper is also stepping down as Treasurer at this AGM and we are all indebted to him for his close stewardship of our finances. However, we shall not be losing his experience, as he will be continuing to as a member of the committee.

Towards the end of the year, we were fortunate to be able to co-opt two additional committee members. Mari McLoughlin is standing for election as Ted's replacement at the AGM and, as many of you will have read, she has also nobly agreed to take over the organisation of Village Day for 2019.

The second co-optee was Tony O'Sullivan, who agreed to help boost our numbers and bring his previous experience as a full committee member to our decision making.

We are still looking to fill our other vacant committee roles (as set out in the AGM Notice), so that we can deliver on all our objectives and we will continue our efforts to this end in 2019.

Finances

Our financial situation is well covered in the Accounts and the Treasurer's Report, both of which are available, alongside my Report.

Nevertheless, I would wish to comment that, following the increase in subscription agreed at last year's AGM, we are more confident that the organisation's financial position for the immediate future has been secured. The threat of grants being reduced or withdrawn to cover our activities is ever present and we shall be keeping a close eye in particular, on how matters will be organised under the Unitary Authority arrangements from 1 April 2020.

With the increased subscription only becoming effective for renewals from 1 January this year, it is too early to say if this will put off any existing members. Despite the fact that £10 p.a. is very good value for all that we deliver, we do anticipate a few membership losses in 2019 as a result of the increase and are budgeting accordingly.

Membership

As I have previously reported, we lose a reasonable number of household members each year, all for very good reasons, including residents who have moved away from the village. Since 2014, we have still been able to keep the total number of household members around 700 by signing up new members but at the end of 2018, the number dipped to 680 and has since reduced to 670.

We believe that this is primarily to do with the limited resources we have had available to address membership development, so are including this as an objective in 2019.

We continue to have the majority of businesses, clubs, schools and voluntary organisations as members.

Emerging Local Plan

We have continued to play an active role in the Coordination Group, formed jointly by the Community Association and Parish Council to address the community's response to proposals within the emerging Plan.

In March, we were a signatory, together with the Parish Council, to a joint letter to Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils concerning the land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane. This set out many strong reasons why the proposed release for development of 51 hectares of land from the Green Belt should not take place.

Since that letter – a copy of which was drawn to members’ attention – there has been no indication as to whether or not its contents have influenced the final Plan and, with the publishing of the Draft Local Plan consultation being delayed on several occasions, we will have to wait a few more months to find out.

The delays did result in a reduced time involvement but this is about to change and will be explained in the session that follows the AGM.

Neighbourhood Plan

I reported last year that a decision on whether or not a Neighbourhood Plan should be pursued had not yet been made and this remains the situation.

A key consideration is that a Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the District Councils’ Local Plan and it is viewed as sensible to wait until this has been adopted, before committing to what would be a major exercise.

Were it to be pursued, it would be led by the Parish Council and would involve a team of people drawn from the community, to undertake extensive research and prepare a draft of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Adoption of the Local Plan is probably some 12 months away and I expect to be advising the final decision at next year’s AGM.

Community Improvement Plan

This refreshed Plan has now been published and is shortly to be shared with members and made available to the community.

For those members unaware of the background, the Community Association has overall responsibility for this Plan, resulting from the amalgamation of the Little Chalfont Village Society and the Little Chalfont Revitalisation Group, when the Community Association was formed in 2009.

The Revitalisation Group was responsible for the creation of the original Community Action Plan, published in March 2009. As access to funding is dependent on an up-to-date Plan, a review was considered essential and this was undertaken through a consultation with the community. The refreshed version, now entitled the Community Improvement Plan, has now been finalised.

It reflects the stated aspirations of our community and has been positioned to have relevance, irrespective of any further growth from developments. It should serve us well for the foreseeable future.

We intend to enhance communication of the progress being made in implementing the plan, particularly through our newsletters and on our website.

GDPR

The Association is, of course, subject to these regulations and its requirements were put in place in the first half of the year. Our Privacy Statement and Privacy Policy are now available from the website or in printed form on request.

Our grateful thanks are due to Adrian Lockyer, who spent much time in researching and preparing our compliance documents.

Other Activities

Our **Good Neighbour** initiative has been moving forward and we have benefitted greatly from a working group during the year, ably led by Ina Hobden. Our current approach is being reviewed by Helen Tyers and an increase in the level of promotion is an expected outcome. Helen's commitment to the initiative has been second to none.

I have reported in earlier years of the importance of our networking and this has been maintained during the year. Close to home, Shirley Strange has done an excellent job in ensuring that all our **voluntary organisations** feel part of village life and she continues to keep them informed of potential funding sources for their own projects.

Volunteers

My report would not be complete without mentioning the support from our many volunteers, whether this is for delivering the newsletters for the Association and Parish Council or providing manpower behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of Village Day.

To all of you who volunteer, your help is greatly appreciated and I thank you on behalf of both the membership and the community.

Looking Forward

2019 will be an interesting and important year. We shall be learning how Little Chalfont will be affected by the Local Plan and how local government will change our lives as the details under the Unitary Authority arrangements unfold. These will undoubtedly require our attention, alongside the continued close involvement, not only with the Parish Council but also the membership and community as a whole.

Maintaining our other activities without a full committee complement may well need us to prioritise but we shall do our best to deliver on all fronts.

Thank you all for your membership and for your support.

Roger Funk

Chairman

18 March 2019