



# LITTLE CHALFONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 29 March 2023

### Chairman's Report

#### Introduction

In my report last year, I advised that we were at a crossroads and my overall message to you all is that, sadly, there will soon have to be changes, if the benefits that we aim to deliver to the community are to continue.

The review to which I also referred last year has commenced and we are looking at every single aspect of our activities, including how we are structured and financed. It is too soon to provide you with any indication of what these changes might entail but I anticipate that our review will be completed by the end of the summer and that we may well be calling a special meeting to place proposals for you to consider, before our AGM next year.

Now is the right time to undertake this review. Our finances are still in a good place but the future is uncertain and a new model will be needed.

#### Our 2022 achievements

Your committee members remained unchanged during the year and due to their commitment, we have been able to deliver most of what we set out to achieve.

- Setting up the Café 22 memory cafe in February last year, under the umbrella of the Association has proved to be a great success. Led by Helen Tyers, it meets every week in the hall of St Georges Church and Helen has been very ably supported by a great team of trained volunteers. It is the first element of an objective for Little Chalfont to become a Dementia Friendly Village and within a few months will become independent by setting itself up in the form of a charity.
- We have been able to continue to finance the Christmas lights, hanging baskets and the six-monthly printed newsletter.

The Christmas lights and hanging baskets were initiated by the Revitalisation Group, which is still very much part of the Association (following the merger with the Village Society to create the Community Association some 12 years ago) and both of these 'projects' are, we believe, appreciated by the community.

The newsletter, which is delivered to every household, business and voluntary organisation, enables us to reach the whole community and is at the forefront of our communication strategy.

- The membership's support of the initiative of Catherine Kunzig Murphy and Jules Hargreaves, by donating much needed food and other items to the

Chiltern Foodbank, helped to achieve a total of over 4.5 tonnes. We were pleased to assist with the promotion.

- Working jointly with the Parish Council through the Coordination Group to object to the loss of our much-valued Green Belt land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane (of which more later).
- As a stakeholder in this community owned amenity, continuing to play an active part in the running of the Nature Park by having a representative on the Management Group (Shirley Strange).
- Maintained our links with all that is going on by inviting representatives to attend our committee meetings from the Amersham and Villages Community Board, the Parish Council, GE Healthcare, Cytiva and Dr Challoners High School.
- We have still been able to submit comments and objections for those planning applications that have a wider implication for the village, whether this is where Green Belt is involved or they have an adverse effect of the village centre. (By way of example, we have strongly objected to the new flats that are proposed to replace the former Cansdales premises to the rear of Nightingales Corner, where both the shops and residents will suffer.)

All of this has been achieved by your committee and I thank each and every one of them, for myself and on your behalf, for their commitment, loyalty and positivity.

### **Reasons for the strategic review**

Without going into every detail, our challenges have increased and I briefly list them below:

- Up until 2018 we were maintaining our household membership at around 700 but this has now reduced to circa 500 mainly due to non-renewals – the reasons for which have not been fully bottomed out. The pandemic does seem to have altered the priorities of many residents but one of our greatest strengths is the level of membership, when lobbying for improvements.
- The increased subscription to £10 p.a. in 2019 has maintained the level of income but unless the membership trend can be reversed, our ability to seek improvements will carry less weight and our income will reduce.
- The loss of the annual £2000 discretionary grant (mentioned in the Treasurers Report) will have a material effect on all that we could deliver in the future.
- Like everyone, we are face with increased costs
- We have failed so far in our attempts to attract new committee members to fill the vacant roles or even find volunteers to pick up specific roles, without becoming members of the committee.
- Succession issues for the present committee members.

There will be solutions to these challenges and we will find a way forward but I expect that there will have to be organisational changes, which could well be material.

## **Development of the land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane**

My report would not be complete without touching on the very disappointing outcome of the Public Inquiry, allowing the appeal by the developers to the refusal of the application by Buckinghamshire Council.

As we meet for our AGM, barely three weeks will have passed since the decision of the Inspector was published. When I circulated the news, I advised that the Coordination Group would be considering all the implications and these deliberations continue. With the development sadly looking to be almost inevitable, it will be vital that there will be a means to ensure that there are the best possible outcomes from the application for full approval and during the construction. This will be the focus in the coming weeks and, as the way forward becomes clear, it will be shared with you.

An initial joint statement has been issued by the parish council and the association, a copy of which you will receive by the 29<sup>th</sup> March.

### **To close**

On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your continued support and extend our appreciation to all of you who find time to volunteer to help us with specific tasks, including the delivery of the newsletters.

And to end on a positive note, I hope that you share our delight that this year will see the return of Village Day, when we can again celebrate what our community has to offer.

*Roger Funk*

Chairman

25 March 2023