

COMMUNITY CALL

FROM THE CHAIR

What strange and worrying times have engulfed the world?

It is difficult to envisage that at last year's AGM how different the world would be this year.

Due to current social distancing requirements, we are unable to hold our normal AGM this year, but plan to hold it virtually through email. This is my first report as Chairman and until COVID-19 arrived in March we had been enjoying another successful year.

COVID-19:

The village response to COVID-19 has been excellent.

We formed a small core team from the Community Association and St John's Church right at the start and undertook a leaflet drop to all village households, providing contact information for any villager who needed any type of support including shopping, prescription collections, pastoral support or a regular phone call and asking for people to step up and volunteer their services.

We received offers of help and support from over 50 people - a tremendous response.

We have been fortunate that overall we have not received many calls for help, and these included being contacted by relatives living away from the village concerned about their parents and we have followed up each of their concerns.

We have kept a comprehensive log of all actions we have taken, so there is an auditable trail if any issues were to arise in the future.

When we received a call for help, we assessed the appropriate course of action, in some instances we managed to connect people with neighbours, who were on the volunteer list, otherwise members of the core team actioned the response directly. I am grateful to Jacquie Rose and Rob Warren, in particular, for actioning a number of the requests and to David Harmer, who acted as the primary contact for most requests.

We registered our support group with Buckinghamshire Council Community Support Hub, where residents can search for volunteer groups and other services in their local area who can help them cope.

As I write this report we are slowly coming out of lockdown and I urge villagers to continue to follow the government guidelines to ensure there is not a second peak.

EVENTS:

Up until March we were having another excellent year!!

The **Annual Fireworks** night continues to be very successful and we draw families from far afield as they know that we always hold the event on the 5th November and that we have a bonfire as well as fireworks.

This was the first time I have been close to the co-ordination and I was in awe of the efforts that the village puts in to make it so successful.

We were delighted to host the **Chalfont Epilepsy Society** who contacted us about parking provision. The village response was brilliant and this is summed up by the comments we received from the Society after the event:

"You and your team put in a tremendous effort to ensure things ran as smoothly as possible for us; this is way more than I ever expected when I first approached you. Everyone was very kind, welcoming and helpful and all of our residents that attended had such a fun time!"

My thanks to everyone who helped to make the event so successful.

Other events through the year included a **Family Rounders day** on the Glebe, which was enjoyed by many families. We welcomed back **Victor and Albert** in November for another entertaining evening, thanks to Mary Axon for organising.

Our **Family Christmas Party** attracted more families than the previous year, thanks to Elizabeth Foster and Paula Harris for the organising.

Then we were fortunate to be able to attend the village **Burns Night**, which runs every few years. Many thanks go to the Barbour, Macklins and Watts for all their hard work in arranging such a fantastic evening. All my guests have already asked to be put on the list for the next one.

Finally Rob and Jo Barnes ran another really great **Quiz Night** - see later article - just before lockdown.

As the country celebrated the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in lockdown, the village spontaneously arranged displays and treasure hunt letters around the village and thanks go to Sophia Douglas for leading the event. Also See later article!

Sadly, our annual Summer Fair has had to be cancelled due to social distancing requirements and no other events, in the near term, are being considered at the moment.

We are also fearful that our Annual Bonfire and Firework night may not be able to go ahead either, but we will need to see what the guidelines are in place nearer the time.

However, on brighter note and assuming normality returns in 2021 I am delighted to inform you that we have a provisional booking for the **Budapest Café Orchestra** to play at the Memorial Hall on Saturday 20th March 2021. Led by jazz violin superstar Christian Garrick this group play traditional folk and gypsy music from across the Balkans and Russia and they play throughout the country.

I am hopeful that this will be our first event at which the village can come together as a group post the lockdown.

ACTIVITIES:

The children's playground at the Glebe kindly installed by Alby Russell many years ago needs replacing. Mark Broschomb - on behalf of the Parish Council - applied to Bucks County Council for a grant to help with the development of an Outdoor Well Being Facility and received a grant of £32,000. This was the highest award in Bucks.

The plan is to build a new playground similar in design to the successful Wigginton playground, to include also an adult exercise area and then hopefully a full connection to the Memorial Hall - and maybe a Café/Shop too - so that it can act as a focal point for the village.

The outline plans were described in the last issue of "Community Call".

The award is to be cash matched, so the whole community will need to fund an equal £32,000, either through funds or labour.

A committee is being formed to manage all aspects of the process from planning to fund raising. However due to the current lockdown the kickoff meeting has been delayed. We are hopeful that the entire village will engage in this exciting project moving forward.

FUNDING:

The Community Association generates funds for the benefit of the village and the upkeep of the buildings we manage, through events and lettings. The Lettings have been successfully run by Cath Hurling for the last 7 years, but she moved to Tring in March. We must thank Cath and husband Dave for the enormous contribution they have made to the village and wish them well for the next phase of their lives.

However, that did leave a big hole to fill, but fortune played its hand and Jill Higby offered to take on the role, for which we are very grateful. This change did enable us to move the lettings bookings on to a digital platform, which should make it easier for everyone moving forward.

COVID-19 has negatively impacted our letting's income as a charity, as all our building shut in March, but we successfully applied for government grants to support us through this difficult time and we continue to support the various affiliated clubs and associations including St John's Church, the Good Neighbours, and WI.

We formed a Work sub-committee for work that is required on our ageing buildings and Roger Watts has prepared a work schedule but given our income has ceased we are only focussing on any essential work.

ISSUES THAT HAVE CONFRONTED US

The threat to the Association of a high rent for the Old School has potentially surfaced again as the Chiltern District Council has applied to the Land Registry for ownership, as part of their 'tiding up' process before the unity council was formed.

We have attempted to secure assurances of the Council's intentions, if they were granted ownership and when failing to receive satisfactory assurances, lodged an objection to the Land Registry. We await a response from the Land Registry.

Several issues still concern the village, namely the threat of unsustainable large housing developments in the area, inappropriate planning applications and the damage to our country lane verges by increasing traffic. We continue to work with the Council and the Parish Council to monitor developments and make our views known to decision-makers. My thanks to Mark Shaw for his help on these matters.

We are all aware that the **Golden Eagle** has struggled over the last few years, however just as bright light shone - when Denis and Eunice and their young family came in February - they had to shut down. They have shown great initiative to develop a food takeaway service with Fish & Chips on Fridays, Sunday Roasts, Wednesday Specials and their Burger van. I would like to thank everyone who has supported them through this difficult time, and we look forward to when they can fully open for business.

I must take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps to make village life so enjoyable and in particular members of the committee, without whom nothing would happen.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Elizabeth Foster, who is standing down from the Committee after 21 years of service at the AGM. Elizabeth's contribution to the successful running of the Association has been immense and her reliability and regular involvement will be sorely missed.

Rob Youngs - Chairman 9th June 2020

"CLAP" FOR THE NHS **and all support staff**



In a great show of Community Spirit, villagers turned out spontaneously for ten Thursday evenings at 8.00pm to show support for the NHS and all Support staff.

Not only did they clap, but they had saucepans and cans and made a real din along with all the people across the UK who were doing the same.

The noise could be heard all around the village. Well done!

FRIDAY MAY 8th MARKED THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF V.E. DAY.



On occasions like that in previous years, the country usually had national and local celebrations to mark the day, but this year the COVID virus pandemic meant that such celebrations could not go ahead - well not in the same way anyway.

We were lucky to have Sophia Munro in the village who put together a programme for a “Lockdown” celebration here in Ashley Green which included:-

A Teddy Bear Hunt, a “Gnome” Treasure hunt, a “Dress up a Mannequin” competition and a “Find the Letter” search to see how many letters you could see dotted around the village to make a slogan. All aimed mainly at the children of course!!!

For the grown ups and all the family there was to be tea and cakes - suitably socially distanced of course - in your garden during the afternoon, and a communal sing along later on singing “Jerusalem” and “White Cliffs of Dover”.

The day started warm and sunny and one could see all the work of the previous day fluttering in the breeze. Bunting of all sorts on walls, fences and trees, and the Union Jack flying everywhere. People had really made an effort.

Then out went chairs and tables, and Teddy bears of all sorts began to appear. Then it was a whole set of garden ornaments and finally - the Mannequins sitting out front. Some people had a “Teddy Bears picnic” too.



Here is another. This was made by a little girl of 10, called Skye, who lives up in Snowhill Cottages and shows all her cuddly toys enjoying a picnic in the sun! Well done Skye!



Now we have a selection of pictures of the Mannequins and the Teddies and toys and too. Thanks to everyone who put these out together with the bunting and flags. Not only did the children wander round to have a look but the “grown ups” were also out and about, enjoying the sun and the colours as well.



We had about 100 pictures sent in and here are a few more.





Finally, at around 4pm, households began to emerge into their front gardens or on to roadside verges bringing tea and cakes or even something a bit stronger!! The community spirit began to kick in and groups began to congregate together - socially distanced of course - and sat to have a good natter. What a good way to meet your neighbours.

About a dozen people sat and talked for almost two hours along the Chesham Road and were variously joined by other villagers who were out for a stroll and to look at the mannequins and bears etc. There was another group on the green by the Old Vicarage, another up Hog lane and yet another at Grove Farm along Grove lane.



Later on, around 9.00 pm, singing of “Jerusalem” and “White Cliffs of Dover” was on the programme. Rather than sing in their gardens, some villagers decided to wander across the green - as suggested by a villager - to have a community sing.

Several dozen or more gathered on the gravel drives by the pond on the green and another met up by the Old School too. Not many people had printed the words and there was no instrument to give a note, but singing began!

It could not be classed as a perfect performance, but people joined in with a will, just “Tum Tumm” along when unsure of words and tune.

After those two the people went on to sing “We’ll meet again” and “Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag” A rousing end to a fun evening

The whole day had been something very special and thanks must be given to Sophia for putting the programme together, to a number of helpers who went round putting up the letters, to John Poston who led the singing of one of the groups and, of course, to ALL the villagers who joined in to celebrate V.E. Day in Ashley Green in a really great community spirit.

NEWS FROM ST. JOHN’S



**St John's,
Ashley Green**

Pancakes! Pancakes! Pancakes!

If you had been walking through the village late afternoon on Shrove Tuesday (25th February) you would have been met by the fragrant smell of freshly cooking pancakes! Hosted by the church family of St John’s, many in the village came and enjoyed a pancake (or two!). On offer were a mix of sweet and savoury pancakes, from your much loved classics, to ‘American style pancakes with caramelised apple and cinnamon with cream fraiche’ or ‘Gruyère, ham and feta’ – needless to say I don’t think just a classic pancake will ever be enough again!

A big thank you to all who came to support, and in particular to Jacquie Rose, Helen and Bob Stacey, Audrey Baker-Self and their team of helpers for putting on a such great evening of food, fun and community!

While our building may have been closed, the church is very much alive!

During lockdown, the church family of St John’s have continued to meet and support folk online, by phone, and in other creative ways. We have been working together with the Ashley Green Community Association, to offer practical support within our community. ‘Lunch and Chat’ group has continued to meet, moving online for a virtual coffee; and the Prayer Course continued online too. While recent government restrictions have meant that we have not been able to meet within our building, our church services haven't stopped and we have gone online, so it is really easy to find us! Visit our website and click on the link for our online service or sign up to our weekly e-news (<http://eepurl.com/gqRcO9>) to receive more details.

I recognise that many of us may find various aspects of this new season challenging. I am always available for a listening ear, prayer or a pastoral conversation. Please feel free to contact me on either curate@cheshamchurch.co.uk / 01494 783498.

Chris Gerke

LISBETH CAMERON - AUTHOR

Did you know that we have an author in the village?



Here is her description of her book.

Have you ever dreamt of going to a wonderful place where everything was strange and exciting? Where noises, smells and views would take you out of your normal routine and let you relax and just enjoy the surroundings.

This book will take you to that place, the jungle of Guyana in South America. There I spent seven months living in the deepest jungle with very simple but efficient equipment, just surrounded by the vegetation, the animals and the companion of 15 men, working and exploring the surroundings.

You will follow me up the rivers where the first impressions of this impenetrable world slowly lets itself known. To be surrounded by noises you do not recognise, smells you can't identify and movements which can't be understood are daring steps to take in this new world.

From the first morning waking up under a tarpaulin tent, we follow the discovery of snakes in the tent and how to cope with the animal world. How to keep your clothes and boots safe from creepy crawlies and other unpleasant visitors, who would like to share them with you. The description of how ants tried to carry away the provisions of the camp and the numerous ways we had to defend our food reveals a lethal battle to overcome the strength and initiatives of nature.

Every day we learned about plants, trees and how to walk along the lines cut through the jungle. Which man in the line is at the greatest risk of suffering injury? Often it was safer to walk in the rivers and creeks to avoid going through the thickness of the vegetation with its many dangers. The two cats and two unruly parrots I took with me into the jungle created their own interesting problems.

Let yourself go into unknown territory and explore the jungle as you never have seen or felt it before.

If you dare then reach for this book - available from Lisbeth.

Call 01494 774550 or Email lisbeth@chalkyfold.com

QUIZ NIGHT 2020

Another great evening organised by our village "Quiz Master" - Rob Barnes - on Saturday March 7th.



This was one of the "Community Events" we stage, rather than a "Fund Raiser", so ticket prices were very reasonable and it was a sell out. The hall was full!



After frequenting the paid bar we all sat as Rob took us through a most entertaining group of questions.

As last time, they were pitched at the right level so that everyone had a chance of getting the answers right.

Rob's wife, Jo, kept score and we could see the way things were going on the screen



The winners were the team named "Raiders of the Lost Ark" beating their nearest rivals by just half a point - it was that close.

Another great evening and we look forward to another in the future.

LOCKDOWN BLUES

“Lockdown” has been an unprecedented and unusual time for us all. We all found ways to cope during this time. Here are some examples of what people did, or found, in Lockdown.

1 Art in the Woods

During one of our walks in Hockeridge woods we came upon this work of art, carefully done using leaves twigs and pine cones. Very clever!



2 Jigsaw Mania

A group of six families formed a “Jigsaw Club” during Lockdown and have been filling in the blank moments doing jigsaws and swapping with others. Here is an example!



3 Paint the Bins

Some villagers displayed their artistic skills on their Wheelie Bins. Certainly a novel way to brighten up the rubbish.



4 Our Puppies

A villager spent her time looking after two new Boxer pups.



Georgia and Bertie

5 Some write Poetry

A Poem for this time! - By Sarah Bailey *Penned specially for the Lockdown*

*Covid 19 descended the nation
Ashley Green was our salvation
The community call to help with the old
saw us pulling together, we will get rid of this cold!*

*The Golden Eagle, instilled,
Fish Fry days &
roast dinner's on Sundays,
we were all quite thrilled to be kept filled!*

*Social media had a food panic in Bucks
but not us, St Johns Farm and Spot on Foods
supplied us with toilet rolls,
flour and eggs, what luck!*

*VE day saw the village congregate (socially distanced of course!)
75 years we had to celebrate
the village had Union Jacks galore
the neighbours all celebrating from their door.*

*Lucky enough to live where we do
exercise wasn't much of a do
Our beautiful countryside; we walked, cycled and run
all whilst enjoying the sun.*

*Thursday evenings became quite a thing
8pm, the NHS heard us all clap ping.
Neighbours new and old spent time gassing
having a laugh and constantly chatting.*

*We are so lucky to live where we do
Stay safe and know that we think of you.*

Here are just a few bits and pieces in a lighter vein to show how some villagers spent the time in Lockdown.

This is not forgetting the masses of gardening that people have been doing, nor the way they have been clearing out old rubbish - a job they have been putting off for years.

Then people have been walking, or walking the dogs, running too (phew!!) and cyclists have been out in force - *and often seen two abreast up our narrow lanes !!*

How will we have time (*or will*) to go back to work? Ed.

ASHLEY GREEN WI

At Ashley Green W.I. we were having a fab year until the dreaded CV landed. We have 30 members, some from Ashley Green, others from Chesham and the surrounding villages. We'd love to have more ladies join us from the village, and don't think you are too young, our youngest member currently is 23.

We did manage to squeeze in a trip to the Bucks waste centre in January. Bucks does not put its waste into landfill, it gets incinerated to produce energy, and of course we combined this with a pub lunch. We like a pub-lunch, in fact we have 2 a month (*we really like our food or is that drink??*). We try to use as many local pubs as possible throughout the year as we like to keep business local.

2020 is a special year for Bucks WI, it's their centenary year. There were many events planned across the county, all of which have now been postponed until 2021. So that scarecrow we were going to make and display in the village will have to wait (*but if you do see a very stationary person on the green with very red lipstick, looking like a lady of ill repute, don't panic, it's probably just our creation*).

We still plan to carry out our 100 year activity, planting 100 bulbs in the grounds of the Old School House in the autumn (I think we may look like a dodgy remake of the Great St. Trinians Train Robbery, scrabbling around on the ground in masks). We try and meet once a month for a craft morning too. We've made lots of interesting stuff over the past year: light houses for the garden, teapot shaped pin cushions and microwaveable heat bags.



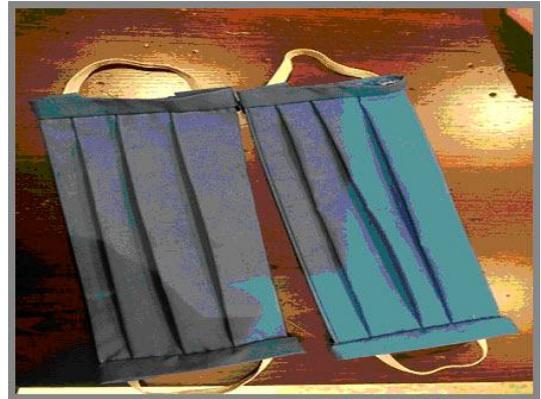
Don't worry if you are a working girl (*oops that sounds too much like our scarecrow*) our regular meetings are in the evening at 7:30 pm, only once a month, so after work should be OK for most people.

If you have children, this is also a great excuse to leave them with someone else and escape for a couple of hours for some adult company.

You'll be amazed at what you can learn through the WI too. There is even a WI college at Oxford, Denman, with lots of 1 day, 1 weekend or week-long courses available.

During lockdown we have maintained contact by phone and email. As President I keep everyone posted on a daily email (or most days except when I'm on nightshift when invariably emails are around 3 am), and by a weekly conference call. At the start of lockdown, Bucks WI received a request to make 1500 scrubs bags for Bucks NHS.

We stepped up to the challenge, receiving donations of duvet covers and sheets from neighbours (I felt like Widow Twanky for a while), and turning them into drawstring bags for washing scrubs in, at 60 degrees. The ladies of Ashley Green WI made 75 in total. I have also been making masks, many of which have been for our members, but also for NHS staff families, and 2 sets of scrubs for a local mental health nurse. No rest for the WI, we do like a challenge.



We certainly all look out for each other in the WI. Many of our members have been self-isolating from very early on, but other members have been driving out to check on them, delivering food parcels, wool, medications and anything else they might need.

If there is one positive that has come from this pandemic, it's that it's brought a lot of people much closer together (except for my husband and I, if I can't get him back out to his boat soon he'll end up with a permanent home in the garage!)

I'd like to thank the village association for their continued support of the village WI, and we hope we can continue to support you too through the coming months. Here's to pub lunches in 2021 – yippee!

Interested?

Email: Deborah.nixon@icloud.com or Tel: 0796 88 168 44.

SYLVIA HOWE



Sylvia Howe sadly passed away on June 10th aged 88, after 2 years of declining health. She had lived in Ashley Green with her husband, John, for 52 years, their 3 children all attended the village school and she played a major part in the village. She was at one time the Chair of the Parish Council, the President of the WI and she served on the AGCA committee up to this year.

She was an able singer and pianist, played the organ in our church, was a member of Hemel Hempstead Singers, becoming Chair and then Life President. She taught and played the piano at local schools, including more than 30 years at Victoria school in Berkhamsted and, as part of her continuing membership of the WI, accompanied the ladies in their traditional rendering of Jerusalem.

Sylvia was known to many in the village, was well loved and will be sorely missed by family and friends alike.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION -

Membership Report June 2020

Lockdown has been a tough time for all of us in so many ways. But there is always something positive to be drawn out of difficult situations, and here in Ashley Green that is no exception.

There has been a revival of a sense of community felt by many of us. It has been a joy to see so many people out walking, cycling and connecting with neighbours in a way we don't experience when life is busy and we're all in cars. The slower pace of life has enabled locals to have time to stop and chat, to sit on the Green in the sunshine and generally have time to appreciate how privileged we are to live in this beautiful countryside.

This is what life in villages should be about, when people know their neighbours, have to be more resourceful and learn to enjoy the simpler things in life. A village can only be a community if we all contribute to life here in some way.

As our Chairman, Rob Youngs, has put in his report, the Ashley Green Community Association has arranged help and support for those who need it. There have been informal connections between neighbours needing shopping or prescriptions, or even just chats over the garden fence.

However, the Association has lost its income for the upkeep of the Village Hall and the Old School with no lettings and no large fund raising events like the Fair. This has also come at a time when we are trying to raise money for the new playground and adult exercise area and, hopefully, a village shop.

At the moment paid up membership of the Association stands at 123 households. In this village there are about 250 households. Having checked current records, there are several villagers here who, although on our books as being members, have not paid their membership for several years. Please check your records and standing orders.

The Association provides **free of charge** this newsletter "Community Call" which is issued twice a year to every house (at a cost of approximately £250 for each issue), the regular News Bulletins, and a Family Christmas party.

Our committee has 24 members who spend many hours organising events to raise funds for the upkeep of village facilities and to provide opportunities to get to know each other.

The Annual cost of membership is just £15 per annum for a family and £5 for individual members. If everyone in the village became a member, then our income would be boosted considerably. So during these difficult times for us all, I would urge you all to support your village so we can continue to provide these amenities that are enjoyed by all. I sincerely hope the community goodwill that we have experienced in the last few weeks, will last when life gets back to the new normal.

Please email me if you would like a subscription form mary.axon1@gmail.com or call 01442 866549 if you don't have access to email,

Mary Axon

THE GOLDEN EAGLE

As predicted last year, our incumbent publican left in the early part of 2020 after just about a year at the Eagle and the pub shut for a while until we heard that a new family was coming to take over.

We welcomed Denis and Eunice and family as they arrived in just a few weeks later and villagers went up to greet them with an evening in the pub.



Here we see them with young son Sean.

That was just before just before the Lockdown began!. Despite the Lockdown they have been doing a great job providing take away food through the week and with a regular daily menu and with "Fish Fridays" and "Sunday Roasts".

They recently started Wednesday "Specials". Villagers are reporting that the West Indian Curry dish has been great.

They also have a Burger Van sitting out in the car park which is doing a great trade with villagers. The signs on the road advertising the van and showing the menus have been a great draw to passing cars and walkers are coming regularly across the fields to sample a burger.

What better way to pass the time in Lockdown than having a beer in the sun while waiting for your burger and fries to be cooked to order.



Do keep going to sample the food and say Hi! We need our pub to stay open and your support will help to keep it going.

We wish Denis and Eunice every success!

For information or to order call 01442 915237