

Walsham le Willows Community Council AGM, 8th June 2017.

Chairman's Report

Why is it that those who have been most involved in the running of an organisation are not thanked until the conclusion of the annual report? Why are they left as a sort of afterthought to the main event, a shared scrap at the end!

Let me see if I can start a trend by thanking now, at the beginning, those who are central to the running of the Community Council and without whom nothing, and I mean nothing, would ever happen.

Ian Bartholomew is not only a remarkable and very professional treasurer who produces meticulous accounts which are easy to comprehend and to compare with the previous year's performance, but he brings a sense of humour and a proper sense of business to all our deliberations without which we could so easily become lax, laissez-faire, and ineffective: the recent appointment of two new trustees, Maggie Barber and Ian Campbell, and the validation of new cheque signatories make the point, together with the renewal of licences. He is also our sound and film engineer.

Maggie Barber is a most efficient secretary, brilliant at advertising, programming and ticketing our events with an unnerving ability to sell ice creams to Eskimos or, in our case, raffle tickets to punters as we try to raise further funds to modernise the Memorial Village Hall.

Keith Rothon brings the rigorous discipline of his day job for Rodwell Bayne to managing the complex daily needs of the many different hirers of the hall, ensuring that maintenance and running repairs are dealt with and issues of Health and Safety adhered to thoroughly.

Jeannie Bloomfield is tireless in her pursuit to bring the routine and sometimes the drama of village life to our doors every month. She has the help of husband Fred and Jan Hall as printers of her every word, together with a team of nearly twenty volunteer collators. Jan's husband John assembles the all important advertisers whose fees help to pay the costs of producing The Walsham Observer. And she can quickly turn her hand to refreshments where there is a need – this evening for example.

Judith Thomas hires the hall most Thursdays to run her dance, speech and drama classes for our youngsters of 4 – 18 which lead to stage productions in aid of village hall funds and a venue for highly successful twice yearly examinations of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, LAMDA qualifications which contribute to GCSE results and whose examiners have international accreditation.

We are most grateful to Shirley White for organising the monthly Community Lunch and for being a central figure in the group of over 20 volunteers who bake for and run the twice weekly Coffee Shop alongside the Satellite Post Office; Kevin Boardley for taking responsibility for refreshing our village website; Richard Belson for bringing in Eastern Angles Touring Theatre; Maggie Barber for liaising with Creative Arts East to bring their sponsored productions to Walsham; Mick Mansfield and Jaclyn Clark for their readiness to help in any way with our programme of events and helping us achieve an excellent place in the Village Quiz; Ralph and Janet Hubbard for their enthusiasm to run new events; Jean Nielsen, Barbara Wills, Trevor Roberts and Ian Campbell for their always pertinent insights from the viewpoint of the other organisations which they represent on our committee.

Non Committee members play their part too - Gordon and Kathy who host our monthly meetings in The Six Bells; Ed Batram in maintaining the tidiness of our grounds; Nic Barber Architects for drawing up plans and managing the current building project pro bono, free of charge; Debbie and Frank Watson for their central role on Quiz Nights and Digital Cinema screenings; Mark Donald for painting the iconic telephone kiosk purchased

from BT for £1, and Richard Pratt for moving the kiosk to its new position beside the main entrance to the hall and for providing a defibrillator to be housed in the kiosk at his own expense.

One name is missing from this roster; Ken Stockton has resigned from the Committee after many years excellent work. His contributions were always sharp and incisive, his manner ever courteous and gentlemanly. He promoted Neighbourhood Watch from the beginning and was exceedingly generous in setting up and managing the village website. Like me, he is a Grumpy Old Man and won't thank me for noting his continuing role as a baker and Coffee Shop volunteer together with his assistance in the delivery of Observers to the 22 deliverers who cover door to door handovers to 594 households. Ken, we are most grateful for who you are and what you are still within our organisation and I now ask Jeannie to offer you our gift and thanks for all you do on behalf of this village.

To sum up, I will remind you that:-

1. We are responsible for and manage a 1.3 acre piece of real estate on behalf of the village.
2. We maintain and run the MVH at an annual cost of about £10,000 and are currently preparing to close the building on September 25th to enable a further £58,000 of improvements to be carried out by Doug Mead, Insulation and Building Contractor, under Phase 4 of a twenty year project.
3. We hire the building out for social, educational, recreational and club events including family parties, funeral wakes, and wedding receptions.
4. We fundraise and source matching funds from outside the village community to facilitate further modernisation of the building, including the extension of secure storage facilities for performance costumes and toddler play equipment.
5. We publish and deliver the Walsham Observer free of charge to all 594 households in order to keep the community informed of all that happens here in Walsham.

For what has been achieved, I thank you all, where we have failed, I ask for your understanding.

Rob Barber, Chair and Trustee