

Chairman's Report for the 2021 AGM of the Hughenden Valley Residents Association

The Residents Association was first formed in 1966. The Sixties was a time of much building in the 3 villages including the main village hall, house building in Whitfield and Burnham Roads and Friars Garden, new houses in Bryants Bottom and along Cryers Hill. Janet and Angus Idle, after a twenty seven months secondment abroad working for the Government of Tanzania, moved into Whitfield Road in 1971 and from that point Janet and Angus became involved in the Residents Association in various capacities. In the period from 2014 to 2020 they were Joint Chairs.

Traditionally the AGM's have been held in May each year but in 2020 that had to be postponed due to Covid and it was decided to hold the AGM via ZOOM. By that time after nearly 50 years of service Janet and Angus had decided it was time they stood down as Joint Chairs but it was by no means clear who was to succeed them. Having advertised for a new Chairman without success, very much at the last minute and with my wife's support, I agreed to stand for a maximum of two years. Having worked for two years as the Treasurer I had an inkling of what was involved.

Since September we have been meeting by Zoom, emailing and phoning to keep up the momentum of the Association. Due to the restrictions of Lockdowns it was not possible to hold either the Potter Quiz or a Senior Citizens Do in 2020. As an alternative to the latter we decided, with generous support from local businesses, to make up Christmas Gift Bags for the older residents in the three villages. Those were delivered to 65 households in mid-December. They were very well received. A very big thank you to everyone who participated in making the initiative a great success.

Some of the winter period was used to consult with the Executive Committee to form an HVRA Wish List for 2021 and a number of good ideas came to the fore. As well as being the voice for the three villages the aim of the Association is to encourage community spirit and social activities. We held a short online quiz using Zoom for 9 to 13 year olds during the Spring half term and that was well received by the families who took part. Many thanks to Becky, who asked the questions and Andrew, who kept score.

It gradually became clear that after all the on line learning and working from home during Lockdown there was little enthusiasm for connecting socially via Zoom and that has not been pursued further. We look forward to the full relaxation of the lockdown measures and a time when we can put the Hug back into Hughenden once more. A cinema night with a French theme is planned to be held in the Village Hall on 30 September and we hope other social events will follow including the Potter Quiz which had to be postponed from March 2020.

Litter louts carried on regardless of the pandemic. Thank you Dave for litter picking over many years and for being an inspiration to many of us. Thank you Elaine for looking after the equipment and facilitating a number of litter picking sessions. Thank you for the many who took part at different times.

Community Speed Watch has recently restarted after having been curtailed by Covid. If you live locally drive in the green (under 30mph) and let the speed merchants who use the Valley as a rat run bear the brunt of the fines. Thank you to the small team who man the machines and do their best not to look too conspicuous.

Thank you Jerry for your 6 year stint as Vice Chairman and for standing in for Janet and Angus on a number of occasions.

I sit writing this report on a spot that was once part of a field called North Maundin - just over a hundred years ago, before it was sliced up into various building plots abutting Warrendene Road in the nineteen twenties and thirties.

Warrendene Road has become centre stage this past year firstly due to the volume and frequent parking of large trucks delivering to Country Supplies. More recently Warrendene has again featured because of the caravan site which for nearly sixty years has comprised just 3 mobile homes quietly co-existing with its neighbours but now there is a real danger of it being extended to cater for 17 mobile homes with considerable and detrimental impact to immediate neighbours, the village and surrounding areas.

I cite these two on going examples of the Association's work on planning matters and we are very indebted to our secretary, Rosemary, for her detailed knowledge, contacts and tenacious opposition to anything unlawful, disproportionate or just plain awful.

Thank you to all the invaluable Road Reps for collecting subs, delivering the Hughenden News and alerting the Executive Committee to residents' concerns on a variety of matters. We hope we speak for all, the ongoing speed concerns in Bryant's Bottom, the proposals for encouraging wildflowers along parts of Cryers Hill verges but of course making sure that visibility and pathways are retained.

One change that has taken place is that the Hughenden Valley Drainage Improvement Group has come under the umbrella of the Association. You can catch up with reports of its activities and successes in the next edition of the Hughenden News – with photographs. We are indebted to Matt, Paul, Sarah and the others in their group. You can also catch up on the Website.

Talking about our website do have a look at it – it is well maintained and regularly updated by Andrew.

Paul Woodford has taken on the role of treasurer for the Association and along with his similar role and outdoor activity with HVDIG he is a very busy man.

I am sure we all hope for a degree of return to near normality this Summer. The past 18 months will not be a time we forget, for some, loss has been the marker for the period. For others it has been marked by the joyful birth of children albeit often without the reassuring presence of family.

Bringing colour to this most disorienting 18 month period I must mention Brenda Morris. Her planters have decorated and inspired us along Valley Road. If there are volunteers from Bryants Bottom or Cryers Hill who wish to carry on the theme please make yourselves known.

HVRA has carried on, it will adapt, it will change. I, for one, look forward to the new Committee members we hope will come forward in the next year. Work commitments may make it difficult for younger volunteers to join the Committee but maybe they can job share some of the roles in future. With that thought I will sign off for the time being.

Peter Cannon

24 June 2021