

BAACA Chairman's Report 2020 - Alf Field

I think it's fair to say that this year has been slightly more challenging than the previous one! It started with the extremely hot weather forcing us to cancel the dog show at the 2019 fete and ended with the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has affected us all, one way or another.

Covid Response

We were ahead of the curve in closing the hall, which we did ahead of the official guidance to keep our hirers safe. Much of this is thanks to Helen Harding's unceasing interrogation of official documents and government guidance – thank you Helen. We also applied for, and received, a grant from Chiltern District Council for support during the Covid crisis. We are continuing to follow government guidelines with regard to the reopening of the hall as and when this is feasible.

The good thing is that we pulled together and showed what can be done as a community when we all look after each other. I hope this one area where we can continue to make progress.

Therefore I would like to thank all those people who came forward and volunteered to help. Whether it be just keeping an eye on your neighbour or dropping off groceries or medicines. Thank you. You have shown what we can achieve as a community.

Following on from this we would like to explore the possibility of setting up a Good Neighbour's Group similar to the one in Cholesbury, so if anyone is interested in leading this project could they please let us know.

Community and other events

Our Annual Fete continues to be successful, raising £1,440 in 2019. Unfortunately, due to the very hot weather we had to cancel the dog show. This means that our overall income was down from previous years but we took the decision, rightly, that animal welfare came first. Obviously the rest of the fete could not have happened without a huge amount of hard work from our dedicated volunteers, both before and during the event. The money raised will be used in our ongoing commitment to improve and maintain the hall facilities.

In the summer we organised Friday night football nights to entertain the U14s. This was a great way of encouraging kids to mix and have fun. These were run by Gary Woodley who is an FA Qualified coach and were extremely popular, also bringing in a new "audience" to our monthly pub nights when the two coincided. Huge thanks to Gary for both coaching the football and manning the BBQ on several occasions.

For the fourth consecutive year, Forro Fest returned over the August Bank Holiday weekend. The event was again attended by nearly 200 people who camped out the field. The weather was fine and Brazilian-style dancing and events were enjoyed by all. This year it was also preceded by a smaller event called Rumble, run along similar lines. None of these events could take place without the hard work and effort put in by two of our committee. Therefore I would like to thank Gary and Hugh Griffiths for helping to make these events a success. We would also like to thank the hall's close neighbours for their patience and understanding with regard to these larger events.

Throughout the year we have held monthly Pub Nights. These continued to be popular, prior to lock down. A couple were also transformed into quiz nights as well which I hope you all enjoyed. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we can organise another Pub Night where we can finally get together and catch up.

This was followed by the popular annual Christmas parties. The children's party on the Saturday was attended by 36 local children. On the Sunday we held our Christmas Lunch for the seniors of our villages where 26 people attended. This was double the number of seniors from the previous year so hopefully we are doing something right. Both events were well attended and hopefully enjoyed by all. I would like to thank Natalie Brewer, Debbie Keen, Sally and Christina for organising these parties.

Pre-pandemic the hall and grounds continued to be used regularly by short-mat bowls, pilates, art, ladies' club, archery and the horticultural society, newly merged with the Chesham branch, as well as a multitude of one-off hirers for birthday parties, wedding receptions and so on. We are working on helping as many of these to return safely in the autumn as we can.

Maintenance and special projects

On the maintenance front we have carried out the following improvements:

- Replaced the Zip wire in the playground, and repaired the log walk. Fortunately we received a grant from Chiltern District Council to carry out some of these repairs.
- We have also repaired the subsidence to the rear corner of the hall.
- Removed the four large conifers from the playground.
- Installed a gas boiler to provide better shower facilities for the camping events.
- Removed trees affected by storm damage.
- Replaced broken goals caused by falling trees in the storms. Fortunately, we received a Football Foundation grant towards the cost.
- Installed CCTV in the hall to improve security and safety for hall users, including number plate recognition. This proved useful within a week of installation.
- Replacement of gutters and repairs to floor where a leak had occurred due to storm damage.
- Completed a "Welcome to Bellingdon & Asheridge" information sheet for new residents which will be available to download from the website shortly.

So as you can see, much has been done to maintain and improve these facilities and foster community spirit. However, we are aware that more is needed and we have a list of improvements we would like to make in the future, including improvements to the car park and the main hall roof.

We hope to obtain grants for part or all of these projects and we're ready to work with any residents of Bellingdon or Asheridge who have specialist knowledge or contacts that could help us.

Thanks and acknowledgments

Over the past 10 years we have been very fortunate to have had Don Baker, who for the first eight of those years was our treasurer. Under his careful stewardship, particularly his determined approach to applying for grants, our finances have gone from strength to strength. This year Don has decided to stand down and take a well-earned rest. Although he was officially our treasurer, unofficially he was our plumber, electrician, decorator, cleaner and, with his wife Barbara, the emergency response team at the hall!

On behalf of trustees past and present, along with all hall users, I would like to personally thank you (and Barbara) for all the hours of hard work put in to make this hall so successful. I hope you both still come to enjoy the facilities in the future but only as our guest – you can leave the spare lightbulbs at home, Don! Many thanks from us all and we wish you well for the future.

Our treasurer for the past two years, Nick Richardson, has also decided to step down. Again, I would like to thank Nick for his hard work in keeping our accounts in order and wish him well for the future from us all.

I would also like to thank Jo Richardson, who came forward last year, for managing our bookings, and Helen Harding who took on the role of Secretary during the year.

Finally can I take this opportunity to thank all the committee members (Helen Valvona, Helen Harding, Gary Woodley, Nick Richardson, Hugh Griffiths and Don Baker) who have donated their time and energy throughout the year. Without this team nothing at the hall or grounds could be done or managed. I know my time has been limited this year due to work and family commitments so I would like to thank them all for their support and commitment.

As you can see, we are a small team but without the support and teamwork none of this would have been achievable. So can I make plea to you all? Are you able and willing to spend a few hours per month to assist in running of our facilities? Will you join our team to make this happen?

Without people like you coming forward we cannot run these facilities in the future. We need somebody and that somebody, believe it or not, is YOU!

I look forward to continuing to work with the committee and any new members during the coming year.

Alf Field

Chairman, Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Association