

Chair's Report – BAACA AGM 2026

Welcome to the Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Association Annual General Meeting. I hope you have enjoyed making use of our fantastic community facilities once again over the past year.

As many of you know, our annual Village Fête is one of BAACA's most important fundraising events. The money raised enables us to maintain and improve the village hall and recreation ground for everyone to enjoy.

Our 2025 Fête raised an outstanding **£7,501**, despite the extremely hot weather. Thank you to everyone who supported the event, and especially to the organising committee for all their hard work.

We have recently held our 2026 Fête and, despite having to cancel the dog show because of the extreme heat warning, we still raised an impressive **£4,800**.

People often ask where the money we raise goes. Quite simply, it is invested back into maintaining, improving and updating our hall and recreation ground. Here are just some of the projects completed this year.

One of our major achievements has been the long-awaited resurfacing of the car park. Thanks to grant funding, together with money we raised ourselves, this project has finally been completed. The car park has also been marked out to maximise parking capacity as hall usage continues to grow. It is particularly satisfying to tick this major project off our list and show the community exactly where fundraising income is being invested.

Inside the hall, the wooden floor has been professionally re-varnished, making the space much brighter while preserving one of the hall's most distinctive features. Externally, the walls have received two fresh coats of paint, with the end wall now scraped and ready to be rendered and painted in the near future. We are very grateful to Wickes for kindly donating the exterior paint.

As always, we were delighted to host our Seniors' Christmas Lunch, which was once again very well attended. Unfortunately, the children's Christmas party had to be cancelled this year due to insufficient numbers. Throughout the year we have also continued to hold regular pub nights and afternoon teas, and I hope many of you have been able to enjoy these community events.

One of BAACA's biggest projects this year has been our **Playground Improvement Project**, launched in early 2025 following feedback from our 2024 community survey.

I am delighted to say that we have now reached the stage of paying the deposit and booking the installation. New equipment, including swing bars, Tina the play tractor, a seesaw and several other exciting additions, will transform the playground for local families.

The project will cost approximately **£50,000**, the vast majority of which has been raised through grants and fundraising, with the balance coming from BAACA's reserves.

We owe a huge thank you to the Parish Council, particularly Councillors Keith Muggeridge-Breene and Andy Savvides through the Playground Sub-Committee, together with BAACA trustees Debs Caen and myself, and to a local architect who generously provided pro bono drawings. Their support enabled us to secure confirmation that the project can proceed without the need for a costly planning application.

Subject to the final arrangements, we hope work will begin in September, and we look forward to welcoming everyone to enjoy the improved playground very soon. Before and after the installation, we will be asking for volunteers to help prepare and tidy the site, so please do get involved if you are able.

You will also have noticed that work is underway to improve the playing field. This is being kindly carried out by Chesham United Youth, whose Under-14 and Under-15 teams regularly play Sunday morning matches here.

I would like to thank our Newsletter Editor, **Jo Askew**, for all her hard work producing our excellent village newsletter throughout the year.

My thanks also go to our Bookings Secretary, **Grace Hemson**, who does a fantastic job managing hall bookings for the wide variety of groups, families and organisations that use our facilities. Bookings remain healthy, and our hall continues to be recognised as one of the best community venues in the local area.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our committee members—**Helen Harding, Gary Woodley, Hugh Griffiths, Debs Caen, Kirsty Fiddes and Chris Wood**—together with our Treasurer, **Paul Muggeridge-Breene**, for the countless hours they have volunteered throughout the year. Their commitment, enthusiasm and teamwork have enabled us to maintain these wonderful facilities and deliver everything I have spoken about today.

As you can see, we are a relatively small team, but together we continue to achieve a great deal for our community. None of this would be possible without the support of our volunteers, our committee members and everyone who attends our events and supports BAACA throughout the year.

Thank you all for your continued support. I look forward to working with both our existing and any new committee members in the year ahead.

Alf Field

Chair, Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Association