

## SILCHESTER ASSOCIATION 2019/2020 CHAIRMANS REPORT

How Things have changed since I took over as Chair of Silchester Association, I certainly didn't think that I would be giving you my report in virtual format, but as we all know these are strange times.

In view of the social distancing rules in place we have cancelled the AGM for the time being, but as soon as we can, we will hold an Extraordinary General Meeting to get things back on track. Whilst this does not affect the running of the association in anyway, it does mean that some "housekeeping" will be delayed. In the main this is the election of a new committee for the year 20/21, so for the time being the existing committee will remain in place, with re-election etc. held when we are able to do so.

You will see on the website that we have published the accounts for the year 19/20, and this confirms the events we held and the income and expenditure over this year. I do not intend to go into the minutia of these in this report, and will leave any questions on these to my very able Treasurer Simon Brewin, but they do go to show that the SA is thriving in spite of what was a challenging year.

One of the biggest changes last year was the cancelling of the Bonfire Night. This over the years has been one of our biggest fund raisers and none of us really knew how the loss of this event would affect the Association. The simple answer is not very much from the point of view of funds, although the event was much loved and is missed by the Village. At present we are still not able to reinstate this event due to the lack of a suitable venue.

So as not to lose a village event completely from the calendar, a Scarecrow Trail was put together by members of the SA committee and a Children's Halloween Disco. Both events went down a storm, with Hannah and Derek Monger and family winning the trail with their Jazz Scarecrow. The children's disco was a complete sell out, and it has been suggested that this year we split the age groups into two, to allow not only greater numbers, but more tailored activities to be introduced.

Another great fund raiser was the Beer festival, which this year had the added attraction of a Gin Bar! This addition was very well received, and more supplies had to be brought in on several occasions throughout the evening!! The Beer as always went down well, and the live entertainment was great and resulted in much dancing and hilarity towards the end of the evening. We are hopeful that this year's event will not be affected by the "lockdown" and will keep you informed on this.

The 2019 Fun Run ran smoothly and was another great village event. Sadly, this year's event has been cancelled and will not be held in physical format, although there is talk of arranging a "Virtual Run", and anyone interested in this needs to keep an eye on the Fun Run social media.

Talking about the Fun Run brings me to another village event we have had to cancel, the VE Day celebrations. Both events were due to be held on the same weekend, both falling foul of present restrictions. Plans were well advanced for both, special VE day commemoration medals had been cast for the fun run, and a plan of events for VE Day had been issued. At present we do not know how the country will now celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day, there has been talk about VJ day in August, but with the ever-moving situation we will just have to wait and see.

Another event to fall foul of Covid- 19 was the Professor Fulford Talk. I am sure those of you who attended last years event will remember how interesting it was to find out all about the Roman Latrines! We will now have to wait to see if Professor Fulford can top this with his next talk.

One event which did go ahead this year was the Annual SA Quiz night. As usual a complete sell out, and a new quiz master.

Over the year we have made grants of £2440, these encompass grants to the Pavilion, Playground, PTA, Christmas Tree etc. none of which would be possible without the time and effort given by so many to ensure that these things happen and the generous donations we also receive. We are very lucky in Silchester that we have such a strong community spirit. It benefits us all, something that has never been more in focus.

Finally, in the context of Covid-19 if there are people (eg elderly and infirm) who need assistance with food shopping and medication collection , then please do contact us, we have a list of volunteers ready and willing to help wherever possible. In the meantime, I hope that you will all stay well, and look forward to a time when the rhythm of our village life can return to normal.