

CHAIRMANS COMMENTS AGM 2023

The first thing I would like to bring to the meetings' attention is the lack of a copy of last year's AGM minutes. We have, I'm afraid, had a technical issue which has resulted in these being lost, and yes, we should have backed them up, but sadly the laptop went into terminal decline before this happened and despite major intervention, we have not been able to retrieve them. Luckily, for us we are not a charity so whilst it is extremely frustrating it is not contrary to any rules per se. The main thing that we are missing is the attendees etc., on our web site you can still access the Financial and Chairpersons report, and if anyone has any concerns please do come and have a chat with me at the end of the meeting.

Moving on, it has been a good year for the Silchester Association. We have after some years been able to hold all our proposed events and make some considerable donations to village groups and events.

Normally, now I would start blowing our trumpet by saying to whom and how much we have given in grants, but I need to leave something for Stephen to say! However, I will take this opportunity to highlight to you all that funds are under some pressure and we are having to be much more mindful of the monies we use and need to get maximum benefit for Silchester from these decisions. The two main fund-raising events are now the Funrun and the Beer Festival. Our other events cover their costs and usually generate a small profit but we are actively looking for other opportunities to raise funds that we can add to our Calander, so please if anyone has any ideas, please do put them forward for consideration.

Not a fund raising event, but a great day was the Big Lunch Jubilee Event we organised for the village last year. This was of course marking the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee and many of

you were in attendance and I do hope that you all had a fabulous day. Many villagers after the event said how much they would like it to be an annual event! Sadly, due to death of the Queen, we are in the process of arranging another Big Lunch event this year to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles the third. This is to be held on Sunday the 7th May, on our playing field and will follow a similar format to the Jubilee with a few additions. Not least a Bouncy Castle, which the Parish Council have sponsored making this free for the Children to use. There will also be a Vegetable carving event (don't ask!), a scavenger hunt, a Classic car display, a Raffle. The Silchester community choir will be giving a performance and we have live music from Sion Whiley. I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

These types of events are not without cost to arrange, and we are lucky that we have been able to secure funding from as I mentioned the Parish council, but also Basingstoke and Deane and through Rhydian Vaughan, Hampshire County Council, which ensures that the cost of this event will be neutral to the SA, and free to those wishing to attend.

Apart, from grants that we have made this year we have organised the Purchase of 2 new Marquees. These are both 8m by 6m and can be used either together or independently which will hopefully make them much more versatile. This investment was needed as the previous Large Marquee owned by the church was retired after the fete. This left the village without any Marquee at all, and bearing in mind the weather in the Uk this could prove problematic for many events.

Whilst the new Marquees are owned and stored by the SA, these are truly village assets. Payment for these came from a grant from the Parish Council and the Church of £1,000 each

and the balance being paid for by us, and you will see these deployed for the first time at the Fun Run on the 29th of April.

This brings me smoothly into the next big event in the village, the Fun Run. It is being held in conjunction with the Village market and slightly earlier than the norm to avoid clashing with the Coronation. I am sure that many of you here are involved in the Fun Run in some way, but as I have a captive audience if anyone can give us any help on Friday afternoon the 28th from 3pm to help with the putting up of Marquees etc. all will be welcome. You'll find us on the playing field no doubt surrounded by tent poles!!!

You will I am sure have realised that we will need to do it all again the next weekend for the Big Lunch, so again having no shame I am going to ask anyone who can to come and help us get the field ready on the Saturday afternoon from 3pm please do come along.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my committee for all their hard work over the last year, as I have said before the village would be the poorer without their commitment and I am pleased to say that many have agreed to re stand. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank Amy Donnelly who stood down from the committee earlier this year, but fear not, has agreed to still run the Gin Bar at the Beer Festival. Also, this is Stephen's last appearance as our Treasurer, but we have managed to keep him as a general committee member.

If anyone has any questions, they would like to raise, can I ask you please to wait until after Stephen's report as I suspect some of these will be answered by him.