The Silchester Association

Chairman's Report

 April 2017

The Silchester Association has been very active during the year , organising a large number of events designed to foster a sense of community and for everyone to enjoy. We have made donations to various Village organisations and been true to the Objectives that were agreed at the AGM 2015.

A large proportion of the 2015/6 Committee stayed on as Members at the last AGM and this has made things much easier in terms of continuity and delivering our programme of activities. We are, however, always looking for new blood to help ensure continuity in the longer term.

The day after the AGM, we held our first event of the year with a Local Craft Exhibition. In spite of the frequent April showers, we had a great turnout with more than 160 visitors through the door. The exhibitors put on a great show with all of them doing live demonstrations and answering questions about their craft.

On May 7th there was the annual Fun Run. John Davis stayed on as Chair of Subcommittee and he was helped enormously by others on the Subcommittee, including members of the Pavilion Section and the Tadley runners. With a record entry of 425 people and free burgers for all runners, all arriving at the same time, there were a few stresses and strains on the BBQ team, but a great day was had by all. Weather permitting, this year's Fun Run on the 6th May will be even better.

The celebration of the Queens 90th birthday was held on the Common on the 12th June. It was a really successful community picnic with music, a games area, and extra food and drink provided by the Pop up Cafe and The Calleva. There were some fantastic entries for the Queen's birthday cake competition . My favourite was the Queen's "throne", with icing toilet paper rolling down the side of the cake. The pupils at the school drew some wonderful pictures that were compiled together into a massive birthday card that was hand delivered to Buckingham Palace and we had a lovely reply from the Queen, thanking the Village.

Derek Monger did a great job organising another Beer Festival in September with a wide selection of local beers and ciders. We had a record attendance and even had to turn some people away, as we reached the maximum capacity of the Village hall. The winning beer was Broken Bridge Brewery's "No Chaff", followed by two beers from our local Little London Brewery. This year's event is planned for the 9th September.

The Bonfire Night is the biggest event in our calendar and we had a massive turnout last year of over 1600 people. The Pumpkin competition had some really artistic entries and the fireworks were amazing as always. I am always staggered by the engineering work put into making the bonfire. Paul Baker stood in, again, to head this Subcommittee, but will not be able to do it this year. Sara Westwood, who has organised the food and drinks for many years is also standing down. We are still debating how to make sure this fantastic event in our calendar is continued. Anybody interested in taking the lead in organising this year's Bonfire Night, please put your name forward to be in the Committee. There is a great team of people behind the scenes who take up the organisation of the different areas of activity, whether it is setting up and lighting the fireworks, selling drinks, marshalling the crowds, building the bonfire , etc. Too many to mention you all, but thank you.

In October, we organised the annual Boundary walk with the Parish Church. A wonderful day out with a chance to see old and meet new friends. Howard Wilkinson kindly lead the walk and gave us insights into parts of Silchester most of us never see or know about. Thank you also to Brian and Debbie Watson for hosting lunch at Hasker's Farm.

Alan Fairhurst continued in the role of quiz master, ably assisted by Erica, and we had a great Quiz Night in February. Professor Fulford gave another fascinating talk in March on the archaeological work done in the area last year.

Having had such a busy year with eight events, many with record attendances, and all enjoyed by so many people in the village, we decided to have a ninth event. A special thank you to all the people who volunteered to assist with organising, marshalling, serving food and drink, building bonfires, etc,. Last month we had a great evening together at Silchester Farm, courtesy of Derek Fawcett.

As a result of the record turnout to events, excellent organisation by the various Committees, and a very generous donation from a prominent member of our Community, we are financially in a strong position. David Westwood, our Treasurer, will provide more detail in his report. The Silchester Association has, therefore, been in a position to make contributions to various organisations in the Village for specific projects and to help improve amenities in line with our Objectives.

A big thank you to all the Committee members who have helped the Association to achieve such good results during the year. To all the people who have joined the various sub committees of their interest to make the individual events happen. To Steve Spillane and Tracy Hart for updating the Website and Facebook page. And thank you, again, to all who have helped out on events whether marshalling at the Fun Run, collecting wood for the Bonfire or pulling pints at the Beer Festival. It could not happen without every one's support.

We are very fortunate to live in a Village that is so active and vibrant and we look forward to another outstanding year for the Association.

Thank you.