

Annual General Meeting Statement

Good evening everyone,

Thank you for attending our AGM.

I would like to start by offering my sincerest apologies for not being able to attend in person for my first AGM as Chairman. Unfortunately, work commitments have required me to be elsewhere, but I wanted to take this opportunity to share my thoughts and gratitude with you all. Paula has kindly offered to read my statement for me.

This marks my first full year as Chairman of our Silchester Association, taking over from Sarah Roper after her dedicated five years of service. On behalf of the entire committee and the wider community, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Sarah for her hard work, commitment and the invaluable contributions she made during her tenure.

I also want to express my deep appreciation to all our committee members. Their support, guidance and knowledge of our association's history are essential in helping us achieve our overarching goal—bringing our community together.

This year, we have also had the pleasure of welcoming some new committee members, Paula Gibbons, Jess Rush and Ann Marie Read. We are excited to have them on board and welcome the fresh perspectives and energy they bring to the team. A special recognition goes to Jess for her efforts in improving our marketing style and expanding our coverage by bringing the association to social media.

Richard Barnes will give you all an update shortly with a review of the association's financial position and an overview of key financial activity.

One key achievement this year, we have invested in setting up a ticketing solution to sell tickets online for association events. This allows us to track attendance numbers, assist with cash flow as funds are paid in advance and as of writing this statement, all three events so far have sold out. This is a great step forward for the association with assisting and promoting future events.

During the year, we hosted many events of which I will mention them all:

The Dig Supper, where the village was able to celebrate the historic digs within the walls and recognise Mike Fulford for his commitment to the great benefit of Silchester. Thank you to Vanessa Richards for taking the lead role in delivering that event.

The annual Boundary Walk took place in October, a wonderful tradition attended by many villagers.

Becca Flood, our secretary, organised the Scarecrow Trail, which was a great success—thank you to all those who decorated their gardens for the children to explore.

Becca also launched, for the first time, a Festive Window Advent Calendar, where 24 local villagers decorated their windows and lit them up on their chosen advent night.

Richard Barnes, our treasurer, delivered the renowned annual Beer Festival, which incorporated the Gin Bar. This was a great triumph and attracted 140 people.

Paula Gibbons, a committee member, organised a fantastic Burns Night Supper, which was a hoot! The event was full and fun was had by all.

Kate Wright, a committee member, organised a Quiz Night with a full house, leaving attendees eager for another—so we are in conversations about hosting another this year.

Steve Spillane, a committee member, organised Unearthing Silchester, another sold-out event where Mike Fulford shared stories of previous digs and captivated the audience.

Becca hosted the recent Rock 'n' Roll Bingo this month, which was another fantastic event.

The Calleva Volunteers, led by Dan Male, have been doing an outstanding job clearing the vegetation from the Roman Walls and Amphitheatre. The group has 45 active volunteers with up to 25 turning up for each working party, contributing 500 hours of clearance over the last 12 months. Further details can be found on the Calleva Volunteers facebook page.

For things to come, the committee continue to work hard in the preparations of upcoming events.

Marjorie Dean is hosting afternoon tea for the seniors in the village, this is a free event for all to attend and an opportunity for people to catch up with each other.

Kate and a sub-committee have been very busy organising the VE Day celebrations for the local community, taking place on the green on 4th May. This is another free event, please bring your family and friends with a picnic to help us celebrate the 80th year of VE Day.

This year we will be hosting Silfest, where we hope to entertain attendees with a music event and attract new faces. Tickets are on sale and we hope to see many of you there.

We have also been in discussions about relaunching the Fireworks Night and continue to look for a suitable location to host it. Should anyone know of a potential site, please do let us know.

The committee and I would like to thank Lesley Brewin for her ongoing support to maintain the website and enabling us to store the Silchester Story online, this is free to download for anyone who would like a copy. We will be advertising the Silchester Story around the village throughout the year and in the local parish magazine, to ensure we capture those who are not on social media. I would also like to note, the Silchester Story archive boxes are being held with Mike Baldock should anyone like to see them.

The association has supported and funded first aid training for committee members and volunteers. We now have seven qualified first aiders, ensuring we continue to provide a safe environment at our events and activities

As we move forward, Richard Barnes as Treasurer, Becca Flood as secretary and I as Chairman have confirmed we will continue in our roles for another year with the support of the committee.

We are excited about the opportunities and initiatives we have ahead to strengthen our village community. Thank you all to the committee members and our volunteers for your hard work and dedication.

Thank you all.