

This marks my second year as Chairman of the Silchester Association, and I would like to begin by thanking all committee members and volunteers for their continued support, dedication and enthusiasm in helping us bring our community together.

Over the past year, we have delivered a wide range of events for the village. Paula Gibbons organised another fantastic Burns Night Supper, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Steve Spillane continued his engagement with Mike Fulford, providing fascinating insight into the history of Silchester. Kate Wright led the VE Day celebrations, bringing the community together to commemorate this important occasion.

Richard Barnes once again delivered the ever-popular Beer and Gin Festival, which continues to be a highlight in our calendar. Becca Flood organised the Scarecrow Trail and Festive Window events, both of which brought creativity and fun to the village for families and children.

Ann-Marie Read hosted a successful Quiz Night, hosted by Ben Leyburn, and provided an excellent raffle to support fundraising for future events.

A particular highlight of the year was the first ever Silfest. This was a great success and a fantastic example of the community working together to deliver a new and exciting music event. With over 100 people attending, the event was very well received. However, ticket sales were lower than anticipated, and the event ultimately ran at a loss, which was kindly supported by a local resident. We will be exploring future funding opportunities, as well as new locations, to enable us to host Silfest again.

During the year, we unfortunately said goodbye to some long serving committee members. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Marjorie Dean and Kate Wright for their commitment and dedication over the years, they have both made a significant contribution to the association. At the same time, we are pleased to welcome new members, Jen Mackinder and Rob Young, and look forward to the fresh ideas and energy they bring.

We have also continued to promote and support the Silchester Story, which remains available for all to download from our website. I would like to thank Lesley Brewin for her ongoing support in maintaining and updating the website over the years. With Jen Mackinder now on board, Lesley has begun handing over the reins, and we are grateful for her

continued support during this transition. Jen will also be exploring the opportunity to apply for grant funding to redevelop and refresh the website, giving it a much needed facelift and improving both its accessibility and overall user experience.

The Calleva Volunteers, led by Dan Male, have been doing an outstanding job clearing the vegetation from around the Roman Walls and local areas. The group has 54 active volunteers with up to 15 turning up for each working party, contributing 800 hours of work so far. Further details can be found on the Calleva Volunteers facebook page.

Looking ahead, this year brings a busy calendar of events across the village, including many being hosted by the pub and the celebration of the Village Hall's centenary year, along with the fantastic programme of events they are organising. As a result, the Association will be focusing its efforts on delivering the Fireworks Event, helping to avoid clashes and event fatigue within the community.

We are excited to be working towards the return of the village Fireworks Event. With the kind permission of the residents at Silchester House, we now have a venue and are working with a professional fireworks provider to support the event. We would welcome any volunteers who would like to help in any capacity, please do get in touch.

Finally, Becca Flood after seven years of supporting the association has decided to step down from her role as Secretary as of today. On behalf of myself and the committee, I would like to thank Becca for her hard work, support and dedication during her time in the role. We are now looking to recruit a new Secretary, so if anyone is interested in supporting the association in this capacity, please let us know.

We will continue to look at new and exciting opportunities to bring the community together, and if anyone has ideas for future events, we would love to hear from you.

As always, the committee remains committed to creating opportunities for the village to come together and we are excited about what the year ahead will bring.

Richard Barnes will now give you all an overview of the association's financial position and a summary of key financial activity.

Thank you all.