

4 Village Hall – John Bradon for Jean Marc Grosfort

The hall has been busy. There are long-standing users like the Bridge Club, Photographic Society, Yoga and newer ones: Hannah Dunbar's circuit training, the Mother and Baby class and even more recently the weekly Painting Class. Jean Marc continues to run the Afternoon Teas (2nd Thursday of the month). This year, for the first time in a while, we have had big catered events for 50 or more. And we have everything now (ovens, glasses crockery) to support these.

In general, we are well equipped – the projector is a new addition and we have a generator and other equipment to make the hall useful as a place of safety in an emergency.

2022 was good financially but in 2023 we face increasing prices: energy - as you'd expect - but also insurance and broadband. Through swapping suppliers, careful negotiation and management of the heating, we hope to break even this year without increasing hire charges. Last year, we did not charge for more than 15 village events (for instance this one and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition) and the Parish Council recognises this by giving us a much-appreciated grant, increased this year to £1,200. As you may know the Hall is a charity which has an aim to provide a place for village activities and I think we've managed to do this very well over the last year. Do please come along to the events and classes.

5 Village Green Working Group – Cllr Frances Parkes

6 Green Team report – Jill Bradon

Over the past year the Green Team have continued to help maintain and improve the green spaces around the village. Our aim is to have a balance between keeping these areas tidy and supporting habitats for wildflowers, insects, birds and mammals. There are monthly working groups to look after the maze and the village green, and a series of ad hoc working groups throughout the year, led by guardians who look after other green areas in the village.

We are very lucky to have a small group of knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers who regularly give their time and energy to help look after the village. A list of guardians can be found on the Green Team pages of the Whitchurch website. We are also very pleased to see people turn up and help, even if they don't have time to come regularly. Many thanks to everyone who has helped this year.

For the past few years the Green Team has been coordinated by Charles Cotgreave. He has done a great job in organising the team but decided to step down towards the end of last year. Happily, he continues to be a regular volunteer!

The main tasks carried out in the past year are as follows:

- Working parties at the maze to mow and edge the grass around the bricks and mow around the picnic tables (led by Sally and Pete Woolhouse).
- Working parties at the Village Green to maintain the wild areas and car park hedges (led by Gill Goodwin).
- Preparing, lighting and managing the Jubilee Beacon in June last year (led by Charles Cotgreave).
- Organising the official opening of the Polish Memorial Garden last summer; weeding and watering; bulb planting this spring (led by Anna Szczeponek and Sally Woolhouse).
- Working parties to maintain the raised flower beds at the entrance to Walliscote drive. These beds were installed by the MOWS group led by Leslie Maynerd.
- Tidying of the bank on the north side of Hardwick Road (led by Sarah and Adrian Dixon).
- Maintenance of the area at the junction of Hardwick Road and the High Street (by Tim Hardwick).
- Care of Muddy Lane, including re-seeding of grass following the recent resurfacing by external contractors (led by Neil Huntington).
- A litter picking day in March, which was part of the annual Great British Spring Clean.

In addition, people have carried out individual tasks on their own initiative. For example, in the autumn the area around the war memorial was cleaned and tidied by David Green.

Thanks also to Martin Bengtzen and Frances Dixon who are guardians of the Manor Road verges. This area has recently been affected by the removal of existing trees and shrubs and their replacement by a line of yew trees. It is anticipated that the verge habitat will re-establish itself in due course.

The Green Team depends entirely on volunteers, and it would be very nice to get more involved. It needn't be a big commitment, and it is a good way to get to know people if you are relatively new to the village. Upcoming events are published in the What's On section of the village website, and contact details are given in the Green Team pages. If you would like to help, or have any ideas for improvements please just get in touch.

7 Whitchurch Award – Cllr Donahue

How many people know this expression?

Some people want it to happen

Some Wish it would happen

Others Make it happen

This is obviously Jean march Grosfort who did exactly that with the Village Hall.

This year's Whitchurch Award goes to Jean Marc Grosfort.

Jean Marc first expressed interest in getting involved in the Parish Council and the community several years ago and he became a member of the Neighbourhood Planning team and the Village Plan team. His hotel industry experience for Marriot Corporation was evident. He soon focussed on improvements to the Village Hall and also later worked on a number of other initiatives as a member of the Parish Council.

Jean Marc was a case of the right man at the right time. We are benefiting from the results you are experiencing tonight. No one else could have done this as effectively as he did. He has done so much for the Village hall, and the great thing is that he continues to act as a welcoming host and even chef for so many events.

John Bradon knows his work well on the Village Hall committee.

John Bradon:

I've worked closely for a few years with Jean Marc on the village hall and firstly want to say what a pleasure he is to work with. He really wants things to succeed, is enthusiastic and very generous with his time.

He organised the whole refurbishment: successfully applying for four grants (£6,000 in total). He worked out what was needed - many little items: new notice board, signs, kitchen equipment. Lots of knowledge and care went into it to make maximum use of the limited funds. Accountants from Grant Thornton Reading branch painted the hall (as a CSR activity). The chairs you're sitting on we're bought at the bargain price of £10 each for came from the Ark of God Parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. I'm telling you this so you get an idea of the enormous care and effort Jean Marc put in.

Another example is the Monthly afternoon teas where everything is done perfectly. Everything is hand-made on the premises by JM's little team; usually a choice of 4 delicious things. I'd never seen an Opera Cake before. It has about six layers, each of which would be a major challenge to Bake Off contenders. There are flowers on the tables and each event has seasonal theme.

Jean Marc wanted the hall to be used for meals and this year this wish is coming to fruition. People like working with them. You know he has got your back and will make sure an event goes well.

He helps with the arts and crafts to which he contributes a couple of excellent paintings each year.

We are very lucky in the village to have someone so competent, generous, good-humoured and helpful. I'm very glad this award recognises that.

8 Whitchurch Village Groups

8.1 AFC Whitchurch – Alex Hilton

8.2 Art Café – Geoff Weir

Over the last year our weekly Art Cafés, as well as being a regular social event for the village, have raised over £12,000 for local charities and groups. We are most grateful to the many different organisers who run our Art Cafes, and also to those who come along and support them by buying tea, coffee, homemade cakes and raffle tickets.

8.3 Cricket Club – Corman Neeson

8.4 Goring Heath and Whitchurch Show – Liz Gibson

Goring Heath and Whitchurch Autumn Show

In early September Goring Heath Parish Hall opened its doors for gardeners, vegetable growers and those with a craft, baking, or a photographic interest, to enter into friendly competition. Entries were invited from residents of both Whitchurch, and the Parish of Goring Heath.

Whilst the number of entries were well down on the Spring Show the competition was felt around the room as participants set up their exhibits in the morning, and then returned in the afternoon to see the results of their labours.

This season's overall winner was John Copeland for his success with fruit, vegetable and flowers. Other category winners were Liz Gibson, Wendy Ferguson, Debbie Leach, Sally Woolhouse, and Beth Strange.

8.5 Hardwick Estate - Mark Hilyer and Romily Swann

Verbal update provided in the meeting.

8.6 PAWS – Jo Smith, Secretary on behalf of Lady Hoskins (Chair)

Last year our focus was on the importance of action, whether by individuals, local or national authorities, to prevent catastrophic climate change and a theme of the year for us was trees. Having looked back at the calendar, our focus in more recent events has been on the health of our rivers and waste. We hosted a very well attended and really informative talk by representatives of Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and Action for the River Kennet, who have now taken over responsibility for looking after the Pang as well as the Kennet. This has led to some in the village carrying out voluntary activities, including citizen science, for Action for the River Kennet, and we are promoting local events when they happen on our social media, like the upcoming Himalyan Balsam Bashing events in Pangbourne in June and July (see our

website or Facebook page for details). Last July we also arranged a well-attended guided tour of the Reading Hydro facility.

We had a useful talk on waste minimisation strategies from a representative of West Berkshire's waste team at our AGM, which we followed up practically by PAWS manning the recycling bins at Pangbourne fete. Many members have also helped with the Pangbourne litter pick.

Over the year we also ran our traditional events. We had our summer meadow biodiversity walk on Hardwick estate. Our apple pressing in September at the Maze in Whitchurch was really successful last year – possibly the most well-attended apple pressing we've ever had, with lots of members from both communities. Our barn dance in October was also well attended, with a local ceilidh band providing the music. In November our film night showing was *The Ants and the Grasshopper*, a really thought-provoking personal film about the story of some farmers from Malawi trying to get those in power in America to listen to them, which prompts many questions about the dimensions of climate justice and inequalities of power. We were lucky enough to have the Bishop of Reading, Olivia Graham, as a guest speaker for discussion afterwards.

We also had an interesting talk from a couple of Professors of Archaeology in February this year, talking about the ancient climate in Iran and Iraq and its relationship with climate change science today.

As a very practical measure, and something to advertise now, in the year we've purchased a thermal imaging camera. This will be available to the local community to borrow in the winter months. We had a soft launch over this winter but will be launching that officially later this year. The idea is that anyone can use it for fact-finding to identify where their house needs insulating better.

We also have sub-groups working on projects. One is our active travel group which is focused on improving local cycle ways and working with local landowners, including the Sulham Estate, on this.

The other is our biodiversity group, which is focused on finding ways and encouraging action to improve our gardens for hedgehogs and biodiversity. We have also supported the Butterfly effect art project currently installed on Whitchurch Bridge.

8.7 St. Marys PCC – Rev James Leach, Team Minister

Introduction

The PCC met eight times in 2022 to discuss and make decisions concerning the ministry and mission of the church in the parish of Whitchurch. In the autumn the PCC began to work through the CPAS course *PCC Tonight*. In the first two sessions we looked at why the church exists and why the PCC exists, considering its leadership, governance and stewardship roles. All of these roles are reflected in what follows.

Worship, Mission and Community Life

2022 was the first full year since Covid when we were able to have a full pattern of in-person Sunday services across both churches and it was encouraging to see congregation sizes building back up towards what they were pre-Covid. Thank you to all our sidesteam members, readers, intercessors, to all those who have decorated the churches with flowers so beautifully over the year, and to our musicians, especially Geraldine Witcher, Sara Benbow, Tim Valentine, Leslie Maynerd and May Green.

This year we made a concerted effort to encourage families to all-age services on Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday, Harvest Thanksgiving and a new Carols for All service on December 11th, as well as our usual Christingle and Christmas Day services. As part of this effort, we introduced an initiative called Kids Sing. This involved inviting children and their parents to come along a couple of Sundays ahead of one of the special services to learn songs and other service components like dramatized readings that we would then be using two weeks later. This is beginning to bear fruit as we saw the number of children in double digits for both Harvest and Carols for All and it is something we hope to build on in 2023. Thank you especially to Geraldine Witcher, Katharine Martin, Debbie Leach and Jeanette Cabeldu for the role they have played in this initiative.

On a smaller scale we introduced midday prayer on Wednesdays during Lent, timed to link with the Lent lunches that restarted in 2022. For those who took part it provided a welcome opportunity for quiet prayer and reflection in the middle of the week.

The summer was bookended by contrasting special events commemorating Queen Elizabeth II. In June there was a Service of Thanksgiving for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This preceded the Whitchurch on Thames Jubilee Tea at which the church ran a popular activity table where children could assemble and decorate crowns. We also distributed copies of the colourful booklet *Our Faithful Queen*. Three months later, in September, we were sadly marking the Queen's death. This time St. Mary's provided a venue for private prayer and the signing of a book of condolence during the period of national mourning. We also held an evening Service of Prayer and Reflection remembering Her Late Majesty on June 11th.

It was encouraging to start re-establishing links with Whitchurch Pre-School and Primary School during 2022. Children from the Pre-school visited St. Mary's for a tour round the church in March. The team minister was subsequently invited into the Pre-School to read Bible stories to the children. In December the church was invited to provide an activity table at the Primary School's Winter Wonderland event and Key Stage 2 held their Christmas Carol Concert in St. Mary's for the first time since Covid. It was a privilege to be able to provide a venue that could accommodate children, families and staff for this event.

The church continues to walk alongside people at some of the key moments of their lives. As well as one wedding and two baptisms there were nine funerals in 2022 and we thank all those involved in arrangements for those special services. This year we were particularly saddened by the deaths of Robin Hearn, David Lee, Sally Trinder and Sue Matthews, all of whom had played significant parts in the life of our community over many years. In this report we especially remember the role played by Sue Matthews as churchwarden up to the 2022 APCM. Her wisdom and love for church and community are much missed.

Several regular activities continued in 2022, building up the social and spiritual life of the community. These included the Women's Bible Study Group, led by Geraldine Witcher, the Saturday Art Café and the weekly Community Coffee run by Sue Scearce and Angi Simpson. All have been a blessing to those who take part and we thank everyone involved in leading them, as well as Geoff Weir for his management of the Old Rectory Stables where many community activities take place. Our thanks also go to the editorial team of the Parish magazine, which helps to keep the wider community in touch with what is going on in the church - Wendy Ferguson, Angi Simpson and Rosemary Pearce – as well as to the faithful team of deliverers.

Buildings and Churchyards

It is important to underline the significant role that the church buildings and churchyards play in the life of the two villages and those who come to visit. As well as being places of worship, they continue to provide spaces to commune with God and his creation, and to be places of considerable historical and aesthetic value. The PCC takes seriously its responsibility to steward these community assets so that they will continue to be available and accessible both now and into the future. The most visible highlights this past year have been the renewal of the church path at St. John's and the redecoration of St. Mary's. We thank Graeme and his colleagues on the Buildings Subcommittee, as well as all those who have helped with the maintenance and cleaning of the churches and churchyards. Special thanks also go to the Friends of St. Mary's and St. John's for their invaluable support and to the Whitchurch Parish Council for their ongoing contribution to the upkeep of the St. Mary's churchyard.

Final Thanks

Finally, thanks go to our churchwardens Ken Baker and Paul Witcher, to members of the PCC who undertake a variety of key roles, to PCC secretary Rosemary Pearce and to all the members of the congregation who have supported the life of the church throughout the year.

8.8 The Sun Chess Group – Chris Bergmann

8.9 Village Plan – John Bradon

The Village Plan was completed in 2019. A group of volunteers did a survey of residents, gathered information from many other sources (road accidents, the census, etc.) and, with help from the PC, agreed some priorities. This report is an update on these.

Ten years before, in the 2009 Village Plan, the top priority was to improve traffic and parking but it was a difficult issue. Ten years later the High Street was frequently clogging up due to haphazard parking - often by commuters who would walk on to Pangbourne station. Linked to the 2019 plan, the reconstituted Traffic and Parking Group did some excellent work, including protecting verges on the High Street, but then hit problems with their parking proposal. During the pandemic, the High Street was pretty much empty but it's now busy again and so the original issues still need to be addressed. Another new Traffic and Parking Group with Frances Parkes, Paul O'Grady and Diana Smith have made great progress with excellent help from OCC Highways. They are about to start the formal consultation on their proposals which I hope we will see approved and implemented.

Most high-priority actions have been completed. The Village Hall refurbishment, monthly afternoon teas and fitness classes, setting up the Green Team, refurbishing the Polish Church Garden, setting up an community emergency plan (already tested by minor flooding and the pandemic), resurfacing some pavements.

I know that maintenance and continuous improvement is needed all these areas. The survey of residents showed we like the village with its rural feel and opportunities for community involvement. There was little support for grand projects (sadly no velodrome) and I would urge the PC to keeping supporting the existing, simple things that make the village a pleasant place to live.

The two priorities on which little progress has been made on are further sport opportunities for young people and better facilities for the cricket team. Of course, there are our excellent football teams and many activities for young people outside the village such as the Thames Scullers and Pangbourne tennis club). I should mention the circuit training, yoga and mother and baby activity class at the village hall. Ideas like a netball team were suggested but you need volunteers to run them. I'm sure any volunteers would receive lots of support. For instance, last year the village hall has tried to help with a theatre youth group.

We'd hoped to replace the Cricket Pavilion and also hoped that the Cricket Team would set up a youth team or ladies team which would have enabled us to get funding. That was too ambitious. I hope it will be possible to find a way that the village and cricket club can work together improve the current pavilion and encourage a wider group to play cricket.

8.10 WDAS – Whitchurch and District allotment Society – John Coupland

1. This year's AGM was held for the first time in the Old Stables on 20th January.
2. The village allotments remain in strong demand, and we currently have a waiting list of eight. The average time until an applicant is offered a plot is just under 2 years. Although this is historically unprecedented for WADAS we are well below the national average of 6 years.
3. Sadly, we report the break in at the allotments on the night of Saturday 13 May. Almost all sheds had been broken into and several items of machinery and garden equipment were stolen. The Police were informed but no action followed due to lack of evidence.
4. We will again this year have an Allotment stall at the Whitchurch Hill Fete on 27th May.

8.11 Whitchurch and Goring Heath Twinning Society – Wendy Ferguson

Due to the post Covid difficulties in 2022 we were unable to make our planned trip to La Bouille in early May due to some nervousness about travelling and the fact that few coach companies were running trips to France at the time. However, a small group did drive themselves to La Bouille in May, followed by a second slightly larger party at the end of September. Both groups received the usual warm welcome from their French hosts.

It has been a real challenge for both us and the French coming back from Covid, but we've each had new families join in and the twinning relationship is still going strong after 45 years! So it was a real pleasure to receive a group of 25 from La Bouille over the early May bank holiday weekend. The highlights of their visit were a dinner on Saturday night in Whitchurch Village Hall masterminded by Sarah Dragonetti and Jane Patel with a team of eight cooking the main course, and on Sunday a visit to Blenheim Palace and gardens where we enjoyed watching a jousting tournament and looking round an exhibition on the links between the Marlborough family and the Royal family from the time of the first Duke and King George III.

In the last twelve months we have raised funds for the Association from running a couple of Art Café mornings - please note the next one will be on Sat. 9th September in the Old Stables, Whitchurch - as well as having a stall at Whitchurch Hill Fete at the end of May,

where our French hamper raffle was very popular. Many thanks to those who support the twinning by baking cakes, manning the stall, catering for the dinner and in many other ways, and not least hosting our French visitors. It is interesting to note that in La Bouille the council makes an annual contribution to the twinning as they see it as a civic relationship and duty to support.

If you would like to know more about the twinning and perhaps join us on our return visit in early May 2024, please let me know.

8.12 Whitchurch and Goring Heath Historical Society – Vicky Jordan

Last year saw the gradual increase in members returning to our meetings, though at a lower level than pre-pandemic.

Stephen Barker addressed our AGM in February on the Soldiers, Saints and Sinners of the British Civil War while Marie-Louise Kerr made the first of two visits in March with her much appreciated presentation of Oxfordshire on Canvas.

At April's meeting Mark Davies gave a talk on Oxford Castle, especially its use as a Prison in the Eighteenth Century, where some of our local miscreants landed up, and the place where Mary Blandy, among many others, was hanged. On a happier note in May, Nick Brazil pointed us to the Literary and Artistic Footprints to be found in the Thames Valley.

The outing in June was arranged by Martin Wise, who found us a delightful Downland tour, taking in Farnborough, with its association with John Betjeman and John Piper and also Fawley – in *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy you could see Oxford from there, but the trees have now grown up. A sustaining pub lunch and a beautiful summer's day made us very happy.

The Autumn season started with the return of Marie-Louise Kerr, curator without museum, with the Romans of Oxfordshire. We discussed local excavations, and examined the artefacts which she had brought along. In October Derek Turner gave a well-documented history of milestones in Oxfordshire and explained the details, and dangers, of their conservation. November's meeting was the best attended of the year. Alastair Lack spoke about the Oxford of Inspector Morse – a fictional detective, but the programmes showed an Oxford of the recent past, which many people related to. Lastly, after the Christmas break, the usual Members' Evening was held in January in Whitchurch Village Hall. A small group heard about the Grotto house at Lower Basildon, and the Swing Riots of 1830. We debated the reasons why Whitchurch was not involved, though an ancestor of a resident was deported to Australia as a result. Through circulating the Oxfordshire Local History Association monthly newsletter we kept members informed of wider Oxfordshire events. We have answered enquiries from family historians as well as an author seeking information about the real tennis courts at Hardwick.

We have all been saddened by the death of Sue Matthews, in October last year. She was our chairman for many years, and I hope that we can make the Society flourish again, as she wished.

8.13 Whitchurch Primary School – Dawn Chesters

This last 12 months at Whitchurch Primary has, thankfully, felt like we have been able to get back to life as normal post-Covid.

We have been able to resume many of our most treasured annual school events including the Carol Concert at St Mary's Church which is always such a wonderful occasion for all of those in attendance and really gets everyone in to the spirit of Christmas. Thanks to Reverend James Leach for facilitating our use of the church. We have also been able to welcome parents and other visitors in to school on a more regular basis. Our Easter Bonnet competition was a great success and saw many incredible creations – think Vivian Westwood meets the Easter Bunny; Gill Williamson has joined us in school to work on the Butterfly Project; and, earlier this month, we celebrated the King's Coronation with a family tea party and Bake Off competition. For those of you who follow our Twitter feed you will have seen that our pupils have continued to enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities this past year including a trip to the Sheldonian theatre, Oxford, to see a live orchestra perform, and the Gurdwara in Reading.

As well as this, our pupils have been able to travel further afield on residential trips to Hook Court in Dorset and Youlbury in Oxford, giving the children chances to take part in a range of educational activities away from the classroom including: crate stacking, team building challenges and river study activities. You may have also encountered our younger pupils as they explored the village as part of their geography topic. Meanwhile, our youngest children in Willow have embraced outdoor learning with weekly visits to Forest School where they learn about the environment we live in and enjoy activities such as fire building.

On the sports field, our pupils have continued to excel, with our school winning numerous tennis, cross country, football, boccia and athletics tournaments for both boys and girls.

We have continued to offer many other extra-curricular activities including singing, art, gardening and drama as well as a range of sports.

Members of our school community have organised fundraising events for worthwhile charities including Red Nose Day and Cancer research, and, today, our School Council led a fundraising event for the people of Ukraine.

We are extremely grateful to our Parent Association and parent body for their support of the school. They not only organise fundraising activities enjoyed by the parents but also fun activities and experiences for the children. They also fund things like our parent mail system, teaching resource websites and tools for e safety, as well as many items that teachers put on their wish lists.

Our parent body also support the school through voluntary donations and we are very grateful to them as this greatly benefits the children of our school.

We would also like to thank the Whitchurch community as a whole for their support for the school and we look forward to another 12 months of success. We look forward to playing our part in supporting our children as they become well prepared for their lives as global citizens in an ever-changing modern world.

8.14 Whitchurch Society – John Bradon

The Garden Walks, largely organised by Laura Lucas, were a success after two ‘Covid’ years. We thank Frances and Jeremy Parkes for hosting the teas, Lesley Maynerd and her band for playing, the many volunteers who helped set up and run the event and of course those who kindly opened their gardens. This year’s walk is on Sunday 11th June and we hope you’ll come.

John Bradon obtained a heritage lottery fund grant of £3,400 for the Polish Church Garden. Much of this will go on providing a sign explaining the history of the site. We had to change the Whitchurch Society constitution after the original application by John and Alexa Duckworth-Briggs was turned down. It is useful to have the Whitchurch Society to apply for and hold grant for activities and we do this, for instance, for the Arts and Crafts exhibition.

Other activities in the year were producing a Christmas card and helping with the Arts and Crafts exhibition. We hope later in the year to organise some walks and possible a community meal.

8.15 Whitchurch United Charities – Sally Woolhouse, Chair

WHITCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES
(Registered Charity No. 264826 of 22.3.1907)

The purpose of the Charity is to provide support to local students, in the form of grants to help with funding of essential equipment such as books, and any other costs associated with educational needs. The trustees meet twice a year to consider applications which have been made in the past six month period. Applications are treated in the strictest confidence.

Since the previous report made in May 2022, the trustees have held two meetings, in October 2022 and April 2023, to consider new grant applications. Two applications had been received in this period. These were considered and both were successful, resulting in £350 in total being awarded. In the forthcoming year, the trustees expect to receive further demands on the charity funds, due to the continuing financial challenges being experienced by many families.

The trustee body has changed since my last report in May 2022. Sue Matthews had been a trustee of Whitchurch United Charities for 22 years. We valued her conscientious contributions to the charity's work and we miss her greatly. In October, Paul Witcher joined us and so the ex-officio trustees currently are: Rev James Leach, Paul Witcher and Ken Baker and the representative trustees are:- Sally Woolhouse (Chairman), John Bradon (Secretary), Sarah Dixon (Grant Applications Secretary), Nick Leadbeater-Hart (Treasurer), Katherine Higley (Publicity Officer), Sarah Dragonetti (Safeguarding Officer) and Katharine Martin.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the trustees for their commitment to this important local charity and their careful and thorough consideration of all the applications which are received.

8.16 Whitchurch-on-Thames website – Richard Wingfield

It is wonderful to see so much happening again in the village, as the restrictions of the pandemic fade into history.

Believe it or not, the current website team has now been covering village events for 12 years.

Once again, I would like to thank our Page Editor Hilary Jensen, our Events Editor and Message Board Moderator Pam Scott and our IT host Phil Weir for all their work through the year. Thanks also for the contributions from our Photographer-at-large Nick Brazil and our Nature Editor Sally Woolhouse.

We would like to find an extra person who would like to join the team. We need someone with school age children to volunteer a small amount of time (say half an hour a week) to keeping the links relevant and up to date on the pages for Schools, Young People, Sport and Keep Fit.

On the technical front, Phil Weir is currently working behind the scenes on modernising the website's software structure and coding, to make the site even easier to use, for editors as well as readers.

Thanks also to everybody who has sent in news, messages, photos and suggestions through the year. Please keep doing so.

8.17 Whitchurch Wallopers – Peter Ferguson

Verbal update provided on the meeting.

8.18 WoTHABs – Sally Woolhouse, Treasurer

The Whitchurch-on-Thames Habitat Study Group (WoTHabs) continues to aim to meet its main objectives, which are to encourage the protection and enhancement of habitats in our parish and to promote local interest and enthusiasm for the natural environment. We also liaise with the PAWS group, particularly on biodiversity matters.

Last June, WoTHabs and PAWS held the popular walk in the wonderful Hay Meadow at Hardwick. This event was attended by approximately 40 people and was led by knowledgeable botanists and hosted by James Norman who manages this important and bio-diverse site. We are planning to hold it again this year, on Sunday 4th June at 2pm. It is always an enjoyable and very informative event, so do try and come along! Vehicles continue to erode the verges along Hardwick Road and we feel that, as these verges are species-rich, with some uncommon species, they should be restored and protected.

In the last year, we have had very useful help from Jon Beale, of OCC Highways, in preparing a detailed specification to re-bank the verges, mark passing places and, at Jon's suggestion, to improve drainage. This plan was presented to the Parish Council last November who agreed it and we have recently begun to talk to potential contractors.

We have remained in contact with Mend the Gap, who hold funding for just this type of environmental project. Our plan now is to follow their procurement guidelines to get quotes for the work and then formally apply to them for a grant.

We also continue to act in an advisory role to the PC on the development and management of the diverse green spaces in the parish. We are pleased to have been consulted on the Village Green, the Maze area, the Polish Church garden and the Manor Road north verge. Gill Goodwin is the WoTHABS' representative on the Village Green Working Group and we are grateful to her for taking on this important role. We are also actively involved in the various working parties organised by the Green Team in the green spaces in the village.

8.19 WOTJam - Leslie Maynerd

We continue to meet at the Old Stables on a Friday morning for a Jazz workshop and Jam session.

There are usually about 9 of us who participate and everyone loves coming! We are so grateful for being able to use such a lovely venue which is so easy for parking and bringing instruments in such as drums and amps etc.

Some of the players have suggested that we do another concert some time as we did a few years back so we will be looking at that possibility perhaps in the early Autumn

9.0 Meeting Close – 9:30pm.