

LGVA Chairman's report 2017

INTRODUCTION

Good evening and thank you all for coming tonight. Our annual report to the Charity Commission is available together with the accounts on the table by the doors if you don't already have one. A copy can also be requested from the Office later. This report runs from 1st Sept 2016 to 31 August this year (2017), and doesn't cover the last 2 ½ months. It should also be remembered that the LGVA area of benefit is much larger than the political ward for Leverstock Green. A map showing this is on the wall in the Buglass room and can also be downloaded from our website.

TRUSTEES

Our main management committee is made up of both elected and nominated Trustees. Up to 15 Trustees can be elected to the committee, and the elections for the coming year's trustees will take place later on this evening. The five Officers are Margaret Rayner Secretary Sue Brind, Chair of Hall Management, Iris Parish our Treasurer, Colin Gage Vice Chairman and myself Audrey Weightman Chairman.

At the AGM last year (2016) 12 Trustees were elected and a further 5 Trustees were nominated by various organisations. We have also appointed a further two trustees in the last couple of months. The full list is in our annual report.

ALL our Trustees are unpaid volunteers, and together with other members of the community who give their help in a variety of ways, we all give a great deal of our time and energy to the Association, and I would like to this opportunity to thank EVERYONE for all their hard work over the last financial year. Without you all there the many fund raising activities wouldn't happen.

EMPLOYEES....

We also have 6 employees. Our administrator Lesley continues to give a warm welcome to everyone and efficiently deals any with queries. All our other employees, the caretakers and cleaners have remained the same over the past financial year and I would also like to thank all our employees for all their hard work.

HALL MANAGEMENT

The hall continues to be well used and the regular hirer numbers have increased over the last year. The occasional bookings for party and family gatherings also have gone up and many of those are not local, so our Online site is working well for us.

There has been a staff change, One of our caretakers Colin Smith retired at the end of last year after over 3years with us, and we welcome his replacement Carl Brazier, who is keeping up with the requirements of our busy village hall.

The updating of the village hall continues.

The decoration was completed last Christmas time and earlier this year new flooring was laid in the office, reception areas, stage steps and Buglass room.

We are now undergoing upgrading of hall lighting to L.E. D , which was a recommendation made by D.B.C to save costs. This is being done in stages to keep disruption to a minimum.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The Environmental Sub-Committee (ESC) is made up of members of the main committee and other local residents. Its function is to examine all planning applications and proposals while seeking to protect and preserve the local environment, amenities and Green Belt from encroachment or inappropriate development. The ESC also examines all National, Regional, County and Local Plans to establish the possible effect on the environment and amenities of Leverstock Green and its immediate vicinity.

Activity during the year has been dominated by the proposal to build 2,500 houses on land within St Albans City and District (SADC)'s area to the west of the M1. One thousand of these houses would be built between Leverstock Green and the M1. The ESC has been working with Redbourn District Council in monitoring the SADC Strategic Local Plan which was rejected by the Planning Inspector on the grounds that SADC had failed in its legal obligation to co-operate with adjacent councils including Dacorum. SADC's appeal to the High Court against the ruling was rejected, and the Council has commenced the development of a new Plan. In the meantime, The Crown Estate has been developing its own proposals for the area known as 'East Hemel'. The ESC has participated in the East Hemel Forum and has met with The Crown Estate's officials and our MP Mike Penning to influence the proposals. The LGVA is determined to limit the impact of the East Hemel development and to preserve the character of the village, minimize the loss of Green Belt and to exploit any opportunities which may benefit the existing community.

The ESC has been proactive in scrutinizing and commenting on planning issues and has successfully challenged proposals which would have a detrimental impact on the village. The ESC initiated a discussion on finding a solution to the severe parking problems around the Village Centre and the Hall. As a result, approval has been given for an extension to the car park at the side of the Hall and the introduction of parking restrictions in front of the shops. The LGVA has also addressed the issue of speeding on the roads in the village and has arranged for the installation of a 'speed awareness' display on Bedmond Road.

FUND-RAISING AND OTHER EVENTS.

The twelve months to the end of August this year were as usual extremely busy.

Our annual Fireworks display took place on Sat 5th November 2016 (i.e. not the one we attended earlier this month!). Once again the fireworks were enjoyed by many families from Leverstock Green, as well as some from outside the village. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Helen and Matthew Glass, and the rest of the team for making it such a memorable occasion.

After the previous year's success, we held another highly successful **Winter Fayre** 12th November. My thanks go especially to Sue, Lesley and Iris along with support from many others on the committee (and families) who organised the Fayre. The Winter Fayre was immediately followed by the official switching on of the Christmas Lights in the village by our M.P Mike Penning. Once again, the lights added to the atmosphere in the Village Centre in the run-up to Christmas, and our thanks go to our local councillors and sponsorship from local businesses which made this possible.

The Choir that supported the event was the Trinity Church Choir, starting the Christmas season off with some great music.

Our Spring Quiz, now with Roy Makin and Phil Gore at the helm. These events have proved extremely successful and well-attended. I'd like to thank Roy and Phil for his hard work in developing and putting the questions, and the other committee members who worked hard on the night to make it a huge success. The annual quiz has become a really good fund raiser.

Big Band Concert this was held for the first time in October 15 and has now by popular demand become a regular feature and another great fund raising event. We hope this will. I would like to thank Colin and the other committee members that helped out in making this great fun.

The final events of the financial year were the **Summer Fete** on 8th July, and the annual Arts & Crafts show, held once again on the day of the fete, in the Westwick Room. My thanks go to Fete sub-committee for once again organising the fete, and to Bernardine Makins and her team for organising the Annual Arts & Crafts exhibition.

Again, the weather was excellent which certainly which always helps! The theme this year was Crazy Cats, which went down well with the stall holders that entered the best dressed stall competition.

All this could not have taken place however without the hard work of not just the fete committee, but many others as well. There are too many to thank individually, but my grateful thanks go to the many other individuals and groups who helped out in one way or another both beforehand and on the day; whether it was producing the programme, getting the field ready, manning the gates, running a stall or providing and selling the teas. I would also like to thank our sponsors The Centurion Club, whose contributions are very much appreciated.

Photographic Competitions, run by Ralph Rayner and John Baldwin, continue to prove popular and the entries, which are displayed in the entrance hall make an interesting display for visitors. Ralph is very grateful to Tom Derbyshire and John Marshall from the HH Photographic Society for continuing to judge these competitions. The winning pictures were published in our newsletter and in the entrance to the hall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF LGVA WORK

Of course running the hall and organising events is only a part of all what we do.

We continue to produce our glossy, full-colour newsletter. I'd like to thank Martin Chapman as Editor for the magnificent job he does. We also have a small sub-group committee who help Martin in deciding on priorities etc. and to act as additional proof readers. I'd like to formally thank the group for the work they do on this. My thanks must also go to the collators/counters and the army of distributors who deliver the newsletter to well in excess of 3000 households, and of course to the newsletter's sponsor Dave Clarke, our local butcher.

We are also very grateful for the support and donations we receive from The Parish Trust towards maintenance; without their help our work would be even more difficult.

Thanks too must go to John Ayling who does a wonderful job as our "in-house" photographer, you will many of his photographs on our web-site.

I would also like to thank Ralph Rayner who produces the advertising posters for our events and where appropriate, the tickets. He has also produced the Fete Programme for many years which involves obtaining advertisers and undertaking art work.

On the IT front, my particular thanks go to Mike Martin (currently not very well) from Mightec for continuing to do such a great job in maintaining our website. www.lgva.org.uk Our website contains not only information regarding the hall and lettings but also general information relating to the village.

We also have an LGVA group page on Facebook which many of you are signed up to and a web-shop portal (Easy Fund Raising) which allows those of us who shop online to earn extra income for the Association.

500 CLUB

One of our regular fundraisers is the 500 Club. I would like to formally thank everyone who contributes to this scheme, and particularly Bernadine Makins, and of course Lesley our administrator, who manage the scheme with great enthusiasm, the money raised is a valuable part of our annual income.

TRUSTEES/VOLUNTEERS

As mentioned earlier, we have a very strong and lively LGVA committee all of whom work hard to ensure that events in the village are well organised. We have some 18 members currently on the committee, made up of elected Trustees and representatives of various organisations in Leverstock Green. From time to time we inevitably lose members through retirement or relocation so we are always on the lookout for volunteers. If you live or work in Leverstock Green and would like to join us as a Trustee on the LGVA please let us know. You can contact one of the officers or give your details to our administrator in the office. This is a chance to help your local community and you would be made very welcome.

Of course as well as helping with our various activities we also need people to support what we do by attending our various events. Sadly, where support is not forthcoming, we may have to drop these activities, which in turn leads to less income. We get no financial help from DBC, so continued fundraising and the support of the community is essential.

THANKYOU Audrey Weightman, LGVA Chairman 27th November 2017