

Amersham and District Residents Association

Newsletter 2021

Letter from the Chairman 2021

Welcome to the 2021 Newsletter. In the following pages you will find your Committee Members' portfolio reports, as well as the Minutes from the AGM held in May. In addition, the Newsletter contains updates relating to various local matters and articles contributed by other local organisations and individuals, which we hope you will find interesting.

Since the last Newsletter we have been very pleased to welcome Virginia Wedgwood as a Committee Member. Virginia volunteered to take on the Planning role and Peter Matza nobly offered to switch to Environment. The latter role had previously been undertaken by Liz Jones, who has moved away. We were very sorry to lose her.

In October we held our first face-to-face committee meeting since February 2020, having been using Zoom in the interim. It was good to see each other properly again. We still have vacancies for more committee members and I would be delighted to hear from anyone who would be interested in joining in one of our meetings. I am very grateful to all the current committee members for their hard work and support over the last year.

We have regretfully come to the conclusion that it would not be wise for us to hold the usual social evening for members in January 2022. If conditions permit, we will endeavour to organise something later in the year.

You will find, elsewhere in these pages, the Notice of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.

It has been encouraging to note in recent months how well the shopping centre in Amersham on the Hill seems to have bounced back from the restrictions of the pandemic. A number of new shops have opened recently, or will do so shortly and we hope that these will prosper. Sadly, the number of empty shops in Old Amersham seems to have increased, but we hope that this is only a short-term problem.

Amersham is fortunate to have had a number of new or improved facilities open in the last year – the new Amersham Band Hall, the rebuilt Jubilee Scout Hall and the refurbished Football Club. All these have facilities available for public use.

At the time of writing, there is still no firm date for the opening of the new Chiltern Lifestyle Centre. The building contractors identified some issues which meant that the planned opening date of 15th November, already postponed from two earlier dates, could not be met.

Please continue to let us know your views on local matters. The email address amershamdra@gmail.com can be used to reach all committee members. Committee members' telephone numbers will be found later in this newsletter.

Our website has been up and running for nearly a year now and we hope that many of you have looked at it. The address is www.amershamresidents.org.uk. The website contains an easy to use contact form if you would like to send a message to us. (This has already had quite a lot of use.)

With best wishes,

Carolyn Spencer
Chairman

Amersham & Districts Residents' Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th May 2021 held on Zoom due to COVID-19

1 Chairman's Welcome

Carolyn Spencer welcomed approximately 40 members to the 59th meeting of the Association.

2 Apologies for Absence

Linda and David Flett, Peter & Sylvia Dixon, Ros Long, Simon & Vanessa Opie, Jenny Robinson, Shelia Harley, Jon Jones, James and Grace Worthington.

3 Minutes of AGM held on 30th April 2019: Approval of the Minutes was proposed via a poll on Zoom with 100% in favour.

4 Treasurer's Report - John Makinson

Accounts for year ending 2020 attached at the end of this document.

In 2019 there was a small drop in subscription income. Major items of expenditure were support to Amersham in Bloom and the cost of the ADRA newsletter.

In 2020 there was a reduction in the cost of room hire due to COVID-19. £500 was donated to Amersham in Bloom, donations were also made to Amersham Town Band appeal and Roundtable Christmas float. The

major expenditure was on a new website which cost over £1,000.

Lynda Wright praised Amersham in Bloom and said the money is well spent supporting them.

Clive Morgan asked if we have to pay someone to update the new website, Carolyn Spencer confirmed that some committee members have been trained on the website and will be doing the ongoing updates to the website.

Approval of the accounts for 2019 and 2020 were proposed via a poll on Zoom with 100% in favour.

A vote of thanks to Mervyn Iles, the Independent Examiner of Accounts, was proposed via a poll on Zoom with 100% in favour.

5 Planning Officer's Report - Peter Matza

Buckinghamshire became a Unitary Council in April 2020. This impacted a variety of local area development plans although decisions regarding local planning applications are still made locally.

The Council is required to produce a Local Plan within five years of coming into being, that is, by April 2025. The Council is working on this plan which has so far involved:

- Responding robustly to the Government's White Paper on Planning in August 2020. What appears most likely is a need to build more housing across the county, including our area and some variations to planning powers that will allow for more developments to go ahead with reduced opportunities for local control or intervention.
- Calling for brownfield sites for development – April 2021
- Consulting on a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – April 2021. ADRA responded to that consultation along with numerous other local and community groups across Bucks arguing for continued local involvement
- Developing a variety of other planning documents to support continuing local planning management

In addition to reviewing planning proposals, ADRA is represented on the Amersham Community Board sub-group which looks at Town Centre development as well as the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre. ADRA has also taken part in webinars and consultations issued by HS2 with regard to the design of the Amersham vent shaft at the end of Whielden Street.

Broadly speaking most local planning applications are of a modest nature involving tree management, domestic, retail or light industrial proposals and public utility and environmental activities. On average 20-30 such proposals are reviewed for each monthly committee meeting. In the past year we have submitted 10 letters to the Council objecting or raising concerns either where we have been prompted by members or where the committee has felt there are general grounds for a response from the Association. It is worth noting that the Planning team at the Council do note our responses and identify the Association formally in their documentation. A summary of those submissions follows:

- ADRA objected both to the original and re-worked proposals for the St Leonard's Parish centre during 2020 and an associated road widening scheme that went to central Government rather than Bucks Council. In all cases the Parish Council and numerous local residents objected based on overdevelopment of a woodland site and impact on neighbouring historic buildings. All proposals were rejected.
- A proposal for 2 town houses at Amersham Common, 133 White Lion Road, was objected to following a request from a member but after some revisions especially to tree management and parking arrangements, it was approved.
- A proposal for 'outline planning permission' for unspecified affordable housing including new allotment sites was made for Amersham Common (off White Lion Road). It was objected to by ADRA as well as the leader of Bucks Council, Martin Tett and Little Chalfont Town Council. The proposal was rejected.
- A proposal for a development at Westlands, 4 The Rise was objected to on grounds of scale and character. A large number of residents in the road also objected but the application was approved.
- A well-publicised and contentious proposal which has commonly been called the Superdrug/Waterstones development, in Woodside Road, was made in January 2021. In short the proposal is to demolish the existing building for flats and 3 town houses with resulting reduced retail space. To date over 450 objections have been registered including from ADRA but as of 15 May, no decision has been made.

- A further equally well discussed application was made in early January for the change of use of the old Lloyds Bank Plc branch at 8 Sycamore Road to a KFC restaurant / takeaway. Numerous objectors included the Parish council and ADRA. The proposal has been approved with some environmental mitigations.
- A proposal was made to add a Vet's practice and dog day-care facility to the new pet shop in what was the Aston Martin dealership at 44 Woodside Road. ADRA objected following a request from a member, on grounds of potential noise, odour and waste. Following some mitigation proposals by the developer the proposal was approved.
- A proposal in March to erect antennas and transmission dishes outside St John's Methodist Church, Woodside Road. Despite objections from local councillors Walsh and Harris, ADRA and others particularly regarding sightlines and pavement encroachment, the proposal was approved.
- Also in March a proposal was made for a rabbit meat farm on Magpie Lane in Coleshill. This attracted a huge range of objectors including the Chiltern Conservation Board, Coleshill Parish Council, very many members of the public and ADRA. The proposal was turned down at the start of May as inappropriate for Green Belt/AONB development; poor ecological information including on waste and drainage and wide range of other issues. Moral and ethical objections were not relevant and not taken into account.
- A formal application has now been made to convert the Amersham Road West car garage site into ALDI. An online survey is currently showing that the majority who responded are in favour, but it is a recent survey so too soon to confirm.

If you see any planning applications which might be of interest, please get in touch with Peter Matza and we will see what we might be able to do providing it's relevant and we have an opportunity to do so.

Questions:

Clive Morgan: There are a lot of unauthorised signs placed around Amersham on lampposts and stakes in ground, including a trailer at Sycamore corner. Can it be removed?

Cllr Mark Flys has recently spoken to the Enforcement Officer so it should

be resolved soon.

Patrick Carroll: A planning application has been made by Bucks Council to vary the parking arrangements when the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre opens. When the centre opens there will not be enough parking spaces and visitors will have to use the station car park and council offices car park which may not have capacity. Patrick Carroll will be objecting and asked if ADRA consider it sufficiently important to support that objection. Peter Matza will discuss at next ADRA committee meeting.

Clive Morgan: council offices car park are free at weekends and in evenings, but they propose to put temporary parking meters in which they should not do if they are unable to provide adequate parking for the Lifestyle Centre.

Cllr Liz Walsh will feed back concerns about this. The dilemma has been whether to open all the facilities so that they can be used prior to parking being completed.

6 Environment Officer's Report - Liz Jones

HS2

As reported in the Autumn 2020 Environment report, HS2 continues to be the big threat to our environment. In particular, the threat to our drinking water which is abstracted from the aquifer at local boreholes in Chalfont St Giles and Amersham. Due to the risk of toxins and chalk being released during tunnelling, last year a 4km long trunk main was dug through the fields parallel to the A413. This has the capacity to pump 4.5m litres of water a day from the Chalfont St Giles bore hole to Amersham for treatment. A purpose built Turbidity Plant at Amersham, overshadowing the current pumping station, was completed this year to treat and store water from the bore holes. The efficacy of this is by no means guaranteed and aquifer water could be replaced by treated surface water if it fails.

HS2 has resisted releasing an impact assessment on the effects of tunnelling on drinking water quality. However, it is now clear through documents released by HS2 as a result of a Court ruling this year that unredacted information must be released; there is uncertainty about precisely what the impact of some of the construction work will be on some parts of the water supply.

One of the documents – a groundwater assessment relating to the construction and operation of the Chiltern tunnel – finds there is a risk of migration of grout or cement that could affect water quality and that

some of the work could potentially reduce yields of public and private water supplies. A report into options for mitigation of the effects of piling on ground water states that the nature and extent of construction activities where water is abstracted makes the creation of chalk turbidity “inevitable”. Hence the Amersham treatment plant. It also reveals that Affinity Water, “has concerns that even small changes in the influx of lake or gravel water to the abstraction borehole could have significant effects on water quality”.

HS2 tunnelling also poses a significant risk to the flow of the River Misbourne. Any disturbance to the riverbed or groundwater levels in the aquifer may lead to permanent damage to this rare chalk stream. Already the bridge for the access road to Chalfont St Giles vent shaft at Bottom House Farm Lane has had concrete foundations sunk into the bed of the Misbourne despite assurances given that this was to be avoided. Alarming, the two tunnel boring Machines used to create the 10 mile tunnel under the Chilterns, will operate 24/7 and HS2’s own conservative estimate is that they require 5 m litres a day of water a day to create slurry at the face of the machines that can be removed as boring proceeds. This is the equivalent of 2 days water supply for the population of Amersham. Some water can be recycled and the bulk is said to come from Thames Water’s supply. But any significant abstraction will impact the available water supply to keep the Misbourne flowing. The track record of broken promises to date (e.g. the ancient hedgerows removed in Bottom House Farm Lane) does not bode well for the Misbourne.

Restoration of the Misbourne

In Autumn work began to create a more meandering path for the Misbourne in the grazing field near the Amersham bypass. Originally the Misbourne had a different channel, but many years ago this was straightened and perched above groundwater level to create a high flow that powered Quarrendon Mill. The work aims to create a meandering path and different water flow velocities to encourage more diverse plants, invertebrates and fish. It includes building a footbridge, creating wetlands and cattle crossing points. Unwanted vegetation and overgrowth has been cleared in the original course and planting of native species is now established.

Unfortunately, exceptionally high rainfall this year created extensive flooding and work has been carried out to rebalance the flow where it’s slowing (and consequent build-up of dropped sediment) contributed to the flooding. As it dries out, the grazing field will be reseeded and stock

fencing put along the new banks to preserve them. There will be no fencing along the unaltered straight path to the mill which allows wildlife to access the river.

Contamination of the Misbourne

The fields where the flooding occurred have the Amersham Sewage Transfer pipe and inspection covers passing through. Water seeped into the pipes in these fields during the winter contributing to the problem of raw sewage coming up the inspection hatches in Chalfont St Peter High Street. Specialist units to pump out excess water and filter the solids were installed temporarily at Amersham storm tanks (near the Depot) with filtered water pumped by hoses into the Misbourne. But at times this resulted in macerated sewage being pumped into the Misbourne, turning it brown and polluted.

Thames Water has now conducted an inspection of the sewage pipes upstream and downstream from the storm tanks to identify where water ingress is occurring and how pressure on the system can be mitigated. We are awaiting results of that inspection and the plan for remediation works. However it will only be a temporary fix to ameliorate the problem. Lining sewers does not necessarily resolve the problem caused by insufficient capacity due to population growth and increased ground water / land drainage demands on the network. A longer term 'groundwater system management impact plan' needs to be devised to update the existing 'drainage strategy'. The problem will not be resolved any time soon then.

Green Amersham

Despite the pandemic Amersham in Bloom volunteers and Amersham Town Council have continued to create healthy and inspirational environments, in particular the Memorial Garden. As reported in Autumn 2020 the Sensory Garden was opened in July, which is a spectacular space. In November 2020 a recognition certificate was awarded by the RHS and Thames and Chiltern in Bloom to Amersham in Bloom and a certificate for inspiring others in 2020. A certificate of recognition was also awarded to the group for the Memorial Gardens.

In April 21 ATC organised a tree planting event to plant 300 trees completing a legacy project which has seen 6,000 trees planted in Willow Wood over the past eight years. A group called Chilterns Green Gym has also been formed by The Conservation Volunteers to support local green spaces and habitat improvements, meeting twice monthly to help improve the environment and personal health at the same time.

Separately, Buckinghamshire Council are launching a Climate Change Strategy and Trees Planting Programme, aimed at reducing County emissions to net zero by 2050. The focus is on Council controlled resources e.g. energy efficiency of public buildings (installing solar panels and thermally efficient build), reducing vehicle emissions on its fleet by using electric and low emission vehicles and upgrading street lighting to LEDs. The Lifestyle Centre is considered a flagship as that has extensive solar panels and sophisticated heat exchange technology. Partners and suppliers will also be influenced to adopt a greener approach. To help offset carbon emissions, over the next ten years Buckinghamshire Council aims to plant a tree for every person (543,000) living in Buckinghamshire.

Sadly this is the last report from Liz as she has sold her house in Amersham and is moving to Brecon Beacons, but hopefully will be back in the area at some time in the future.

7 Membership officer's Report – Malcolm Flack

Current membership is 548 households. This has been a fairly consistent figure over the last three or four years. New members are always welcome; an application form is on the ADRA website or contact Malcolm for a form.

Please keep us updated of changes to address or email address. Committee members can be contacted by email, the email address is on the website.

Road stewards are needed for Chiltern Road, North Road and South Road. Guru Guruswamy volunteered to cover Chiltern Road and North Road.

8 Chairman's Report - Carolyn Spencer

It is usual for this report to start with changes to the committee. It has been very good to welcome Jon, John and Peter to the committee since the last AGM. However, the news of Liz's departure from Amersham and thus from the committee is not so good. If any member would be interested in taking on her role I would be delighted to hear from them. Liz would be happy to talk to any volunteer about what is involved and will provide any support needed in the early days of the handover. In addition it would helpful to have two or three more new committee members to broaden the range of opinions available at our monthly meetings, to provide extra pairs of hands when we take a stall at, for

example, Heritage Day, and to represent ADRA at occasional ad hoc events, such as HS2 webinars.

In normal times, meetings take place in the Small Barn Hall on the third Wednesday of each month at 8.00pm. At present we are meeting via Zoom and have not yet decided when we will resume use of the Community Centre. There is no meeting in August, and the December meeting is usually brought forward to the second Wednesday. Meetings generally last between about forty-five minutes and an hour and a half, so committee membership is not an onerous commitment for those who do not take officers' posts. If you feel that you might be able to contribute, please do come along to a meeting. It would be a good idea to contact me first to make sure where/how the meeting is being held.

As I am sure you know, I would be very happy to stand down as Chairman, which is a post of which I think I ought only to be caretaker and would be delighted to receive any suggestions for a replacement.

I would like to thank all the current committee members for their support and for their efforts on behalf of the Association, particularly in the last, difficult, year. Penny is a very willing and efficient Secretary to the Committee, and in addition to organising and hosting most of our Zoom meetings she has taken on responsibility for updating the new website.

Liz, in the early part of the last year, and Peter, subsequently, have been extremely diligent in keeping up to date with planning matters. After giving up the planning portfolio Liz volunteered to take on Environment, in which there have been some interesting matters for her to get to grips with, with her usual perseverance. I am extremely sorry that she is leaving us, but wish her well in her new home. John Makinson has stepped ably into the role of Treasurer vacated by Geoff Platts, who is taking a sabbatical at present. Malcolm has a keen grip on the membership records, which are now kept well up to date at all times. Linda and Chris continue to be happy to provide support in whatever way is needed. Unfortunately, Jon Jones has been unwell for the greater part of the last year and we wish him well. Various committee members have represented us at meetings of the new Amersham Community Board and its sub-committees. We shall be hearing more about the Board from Cllr Liz Walsh shortly.

I would like to add my congratulations and thanks to Amersham Town Council and the Amersham in Bloom volunteers for what they have

achieved over the last very challenging year. They have kept our town looking very colourful. Britain in Bloom was, of course, cancelled for 2020, but we were very glad to learn that the bloom team received a certificate of recognition from the RHS towards the end of the year. Unfortunately, the Council has decided that it would not be appropriate for Heritage Day to go ahead in 2021, but they are organising two street markets to be held in the next few months. At present I do not think that there are any plans for Band Concerts in the Memorial Gardens, but that may change.

We were very sorry to learn of the untimely death, last month, of Dame Cheryl Gillan. ADRA is an entirely non-political organisation, but I always felt that she was a very good constituency MP.

As you have already heard various committee members have participated in assorted HS2 webinars over the last year. I expect that you will have seen in the press that one of the boring machines for the Chilterns Tunnel has commenced work in the last few days. It is expected that the tunnelling will take about three and a half years. Construction of some of the vent shafts is also underway. The vent shaft head houses in Chalfont St. Peter, Chalfont St Giles and Little Missenden have all been designed to resemble agricultural buildings, to blend into the surrounding countryside. The contractors have proposed something rather different for the design of the Amersham vent shaft head house and we are awaiting the submission of their planning application to see what the final design is.

There will be a series of HS2 webinars, concerning the Little Missenden vent shaft head house on 25th and 27th May and 1st June.

The construction of the Amersham vent shaft is expected to be complete by early 2025. It is anticipated that from time to time work will need to take place on a twenty-four hour basis. The contractors have indicated that they do not expect to have to close Whielden Lane again, but they cannot entirely rule it out. Lorries travelling to and from the site are required to use the A355 from/to Beaconsfield. If you see what appears to be an HS2 lorry in Amersham on the Hill (as I have) or the Old Town, it almost certainly should not be there, and there is a mechanism for reporting such breaches. Penalties will be imposed on drivers using the wrong routes.

It is a great shame that the preliminary works are causing such devastation, particularly loss of trees, in the wider local area. However,

there have been a couple of small items of good news resulting from HS2 works – the graffiti under the bypass bridge near the hospital has been removed and the escape lane on Gore Hill has been renovated.

Among the major Highways issues in the last year have been the extended closure of Whielden Street, which went on for far longer than planned, the roadworks on the A 413 at the junction with Bottom House Farm Lane and the improvement works at the Gore Hill roundabout, all of which related to HS2 and all of which are, fortunately, now complete. In addition there was a major parking review, the findings of which were implemented towards the end of 2020. Potholes and general deterioration of road surfaces remain a continual problem.

I hope that by now many of you will have looked at our new website, which had been under discussion for a number of years. We finally dragged ourselves into the twenty first century at the end of last year and are pleased with the results. I am particularly grateful to Tony Wright who has made available to us a splendid selection of photographs for the website. We are endeavouring to keep the site as up to date as possible in relation to planning matters, local events and other news.

Please carry on contacting committee members to let us know of your concerns about local matters. We will do our best to represent the views of members, but, as I have mentioned before, if we write to one of the local authorities about a particular matter, our letter is counted as only one comment, despite the fact that we have about a thousand members. If there is something which concerns you, please make sure that you write to the relevant council as well as raising it with us.

We are lucky to live in this lovely area, but we need to be vigilant to ensure that it stays that way. As you have heard, we have been very active again this year in commenting on planning and other matters and we hope to continue to be so, but we really do need more help. So if anybody feels that they could help us by joining the committee, that would be great. And please let me know.

Steve Catanach confirmed that band concerts are to recommence in June this year.

9 Election/re-election of committee members

Jon Jones, John Makinson and Peter Matza have all been co-opted onto the committee since the last AGM and are standing for formal election.

Malcolm Flack and Chris Iles have completed their three year terms and are standing for re-election.

Approval was given via a poll on Zoom for the election/re-election of these committee members.

10 Special Resolution – to amend the constitution as set out in the 2020 Newsletter

Approval was given via a poll on Zoom to amend the constitution as set out in the 2020 Newsletter.

11 Election of Honorary Independent Examiner of Accounts

Approval was given via a poll on Zoom to elect Mervyn Iles as the Independent Examiner of Accounts.

12 Report on the Amersham Community Board and progress on the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre – Cllr Liz Walsh

Cllr Walsh confirmed that the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre is on programme for the building to be completed on 13th September, and after staff training will be opening to the public on 27th September. Funding has been received from SALIX Finance, which provides interest free government funding for solar panels which will be great for our environment, will cut down on our carbon emissions and provide lower energy bills.

There are webcam pictures on the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre website so viewers can monitor progress. Bucks councillors have monitored the quality of the work and taken up any issues with BAM throughout the build. Regular meetings are taking place with stakeholders to ensure a smooth handover. Parking at the centre will take some time to complete and it could be six months before it is ready.

The Community Boards in the area are doing great work supporting community organisations, voluntary groups and social enterprises. Priorities are Coronavirus recovery and ongoing support, supporting the health and wellbeing of young people, village and town centre revival, transport including parking and HS2. There have been two meetings so far, the newest one is green issues and the environment with projects going forward for reducing litter, creating plastic free Amersham, supporting a campaign for ditching the coffee cup, seeds for bees, wildflowers and rewilding areas and Bucks Council's pledges on climate change. The success of the Community Board depends on voluntary organisations and individuals. Everyone is welcome to attend main board meetings. Next full board meeting is on 15th July.

13 Amersham in Bloom – Steve Catanach, Town Clerk

Amersham in Bloom is a Town Council led and funded initiative, but the community is a massive part of Bloom. Steve Catanach assumed responsibility for Amersham in Bloom six or seven years ago, the initial focus was to enhance Amersham through floral impact. Bloom is a powerful tool for building communities and tackling local issues. It's recognised across the UK as a symbol of excellence in community gardening and can lead to strong community spirit and pride of place. Thanks to the Town Council depot staff and volunteer team over 80 street signs a year are planted. They are embarking on an ambitious plan to plant 3,000 flowers beneath the road signs, which is about 30% more than ever done in the past.

The Memorial Garden is a focal point of efforts and there have been some wonderful displays over the last five years. It's not all about formal planted and manicured displays. And as part of our efforts to bolster environmental responsibility and increase biodiversity, we carefully manage the balance between annual planting and sustainable planting. And as part of this balance, we have made a conscious effort to increase the verges that we plant with wild flowers. The UK has seen a tragic disruption of its wildflower meadows, with many experts suggesting that 90% of the nation's meadows have been eradicated since the 1930s. And we are really keen in Amersham to do our little bit to buck that trend.

Native wild flower seeds have been sown at Pondwicks, and a small fruit orchard has many historical fruit trees. The largest bug hotel in England was built there and a native wildflower hedge planted.

After Christmas residents could take their Christmas trees to be recycled, donations for this raised over £2,500 for Bloom and the mulch created is used around the town.

Tree planting at Willow Wood has seen over 6,000 native trees planted by the community.

Litter blights our towns and the next Community Clean Up Day takes place on 30th May to help clear litter. New bins are being installed in each of the parks with recycling.

There are some wonderful plans for 2021 including a stunning revamp of Oakfield Corner.

Steve Catanach illustrated his talk with many photographs of Amersham.

He thanked his team and volunteers for all they do for Amersham.

14 Any Other Business

Lynda Wright suggested promoting ADRA on Nextdoor the online forum for local issues. She thanked the ADRA committee for everything they do on behalf of residents, and also thanked Amersham in Bloom and Cllr Liz Walsh for the hard working Council.

Chris Wilson: HS2 Amersham Action Group and the Chiltern Society are working in co-operation and will be launching an action in the High Court against the environmental agency unless they are able to supply information to the Chiltern Society that has been requested. Work has now started on the tunnel, but the Environmental Agency has not come up with a sufficient explanation as to their reasoning behind allowing that to happen. It is vitally important to protect the aquifer. There does not seem to be a safety case for the tunnel. When challenged HS2 say it will be sorted when the tunnel is built. It is important that these things are sorted out.

Guru Guruswamy: One positive aspect of HS2 is the archaeological work that has been carried out on many sites along the route. Chris Wilson acknowledged that some of the unearthed material is interesting, but they are still destroying old cemeteries and woodlands as part of the enabling works, some of which could have been saved.

Lynda Wright: Chilterns Heritage Festival is planned from 18th September to 3rd October this year, details on the Chiltern Society website.

Carolyn Spencer thanked everyone for attending the meeting and participating.

The meeting ended at 2120

**Amersham and District Residents Association
Accounts for the year to 31st December 2020**

Income & Expenditure	Notes	Year to 31 Dec 2020	Year to 31 Dec 2019
Income:		£	£
Subscriptions		2,770.00	2,840.00
Donations		16.00	15.00
Interest		0.00	0.62
Total income		2,786.00	2,855.62
Expenditures:			
Printing, Stationery, Postage		291.53	158.01
Room Hire		81.90	262.80
Affiliation Costs		0.00	45.00
Insurance		150.00	150.00
Social evening		153.47	163.92
Amersham in Bloom Donation	2	500.00	1,000.00
Other Donations	2	550.00	0.00
Newsletter		929.00	734.00
Web Site Development		1,130.88	0.00
AGM Costs		0.00	155.00
Total Expenditure		3,786.78	2,668.73
Surplus/(Deficit)		(1,000.78)	186.89
Balance Sheet			
Assets:			
Cash at Bank		5,270.75	6,380.44
Liabilities:			
Due to Silver Sunday	1	(241.50)	(937.12)
Accruals	1	(586.71)	
Net Assets		4,442.54	5,443.32
Reserves:			
Opening Reserves		5,443.32	5,256.43
Surplus/(Deficit)		(1,000.78)	186.89
Closing Reserves		4,442.54	5,443.32

Notes:

- 1 The Association has no assets other than the bank account. The Association holds funds on behalf of the Silver Sunday Appeal. During the year, these funds were reduced by £695.62. Accruals comprise amounts owed at the end of the year for the new website development and for unpaid expenses.
- 2 During the year, donations were made in support of Amersham in Bloom, the Amersham Town Band Appeal and the Round Table Christmas Float.

Auditor's Report

I have audited the above accounts, having regard to the matters referred to below.

This Association, in common with many others of similar size and organisation, derives most of its income from subscriptions which cannot be fully controlled until they are entered into the accounting records and are therefore not susceptible to independent audit verification.

In my opinion, and subject to the foregoing comments, the accounts give a true and fair view of the affairs of the Association and of its Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Hon Auditor: Mr M Iles

Hon Treasurer: Mr J Makinson

Environment Officer's Update October 2021 - Peter Matza

Peter Matza took over the Environment Officer role from Liz Jones, in the summer of 2021. The role involves keeping a watch on activities and initiatives that are likely to have an impact on the local environment whether from construction (e.g. HS2 or housing), Bucks council actions (Net Zero) or community initiatives (e.g. via the Amersham and Villages Community Board).

In February 2021 Bucks Council issued its response to the Government's 2050 Net Zero proposals which include tree planting, electric vehicle procurement, efficient building strategies and waste management (e.g. the new Chilterns Lifestyle Centre to be plastic free by 2025).

In June 2021 HS2/the Environment Agency(EA) broadcast a webinar designed to update/address tunnelling issues:

16km of local tunnelling which touches protected/AONB/SSSI areas all along the route.

HS2/Align are starting to prepare the North Portal site at South Heath for the arrival of the tunnel boring machines (TBMs) in December 2023. These works will begin in October 2021, including internal roads, connecting utilities, and moving spoil (soil) prior to the construction works starting in the new year.

Water for the tunnelling will be piped from the Thames under existing abstraction licences.

EA will do 'frequent' monitoring of the tunnelling.

Materials used are subject (in theory) to existing pollution and environmental standards.

4 of the 5 vent shafts will go below the water table.

As a result of long-standing concerns over damage to the bank of the River Misbourne during temporary construction by HS2 at Bottom House Farm, Fusion (contractors) and EA agreed to quickly repair the riverbanks adjacent to the construction road bridge as a temporary measure, to reduce the likelihood of flooding occurring. Unfortunately, a full riverbank reinstatement will not be possible until the bridge is removed (2026 at the earliest). At that time it is hoped that more comprehensive measures to repair and enhance this stretch of the River Misbourne will be agreed with HS2 Ltd and other parties.

Results of the regional (Thames and Chilterns in Bloom) and national (Britain in Bloom) competitions were announced in October 2021. In the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom Community Awards Amersham received an Excellent Award, the highest accolade, in four categories – Conservation and Wildlife (two awards for tree planting and pollinators), Covid Recovery, and Working with Children and Young People – as well as Gold for the Memorial Gardens. In Britain in Bloom -

Outstanding (the top national award) in two categories – Green Solutions (tree planting projects) and Nature Friendly Gardening (pollinators).

15 October saw the launch of the first Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy, published by Catchment Based Approach's (CaBA) Chalk Stream Restoration Group (CSRG). The strategy sets the future direction needed to protect and enhance England's chalk streams. The Chilterns Conservation Board is part of the partnership that pulled together this strategy and its recommendations, working with the Environment Agency, Natural England, Defra, water companies and environmental organisations.

Planning Officer's Update: October 2021 – Virginia Wedgwood

In July 2021 Peter Matza took over the Environment Officer role and Virginia Wedgwood became the Planning Officer.

The role involves looking at about 15 to 20 local planning applications every month and where there is general concern about overdevelopment, proposals unsympathetic in a conservation area or applications in the public realm, the proposals are reviewed by the Committee, who then decide what action should be taken. In some cases we are contacted by members of the public, who may or may not be members of ADRA. We also monitor local networks to help in understanding the concerns of residents. We welcome contact from all ADRA members on planning issues.

We have also continued to keep a watching brief on the planning and environmental issues of wider interest, such as the HS2 Vent Shaft Headhouse at Amersham and the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre, which at the end of October is nearing completion. Over the year, we have seen a wide range of planning proposals in the area, many of which have been approved without undue concern. Some however have remained contentious over the whole period.

ADRA has objected on several occasions to developments including: the proposed temporary workers' living accommodation in connection with a rabbit farm at Magpie Lane, Coleshill: 41 Sycamore Road change of use to Hot Food Takeaway; proposed new track at land between the lake and the A413 in the historic landscape of Shardeloes Park; and the subdivision of the plot/erection of a new dwelling at 24 Long Park – in each case the application was refused. We also supported the immediate neighbours of 27 Clifton Road, in objecting to a proposed extension and alterations, which was successful and have just had to repeat the exercise for a new similar planning application at the same property. We also objected to alterations to 11 Hill Avenue, which omitted to include a change of use to a restaurant – a decision is awaited.

We were very pleased to see 51 Sycamore Road retail unit reopen as a Specsavers and 76 Sycamore Road has reopened as a Deli.

Of note / Outstanding (October 2021)

57-65 Sycamore Road, Amersham HP6 5EQ Superdrug/Waterstones
PL/20/3564/FA

This application to demolish the existing building and replace it with 2 smaller retail units and 14 flats, was met with understandable dismay by a large number of residents. ADRA objected on several grounds, not least the loss of two valued shops and damage to the vitality of Amersham on the Hill. There are several real difficulties in creating an access and servicing the residential part of the proposals and a decision is awaited.

44 London Road West Amersham - Replace car showroom with new supermarket for Aldi
PL/21/1309/FA

This proposal for a new supermarket at the eastern end of Old Amersham has received overwhelming support from local residents and many further afield, who welcome the choice and competition that a new supermarket would bring. ADRA objected, not to the proposal itself, but to the design of the proposed new building. This was unfortunately misunderstood by some initially. The current building itself does not merit much praise, but it is at least low and relatively dark and ADRA felt that the site was too important not to have a building, which would complement this important approach to Old Amersham. We were pleased to see that the Heritage and Conservation Consultee to Buckinghamshire Council has recommended that the design should be considered by the Design Review Panel.

HS2 Amersham Vent Shaft Headhouse PL/21/3824/HS2

Several members of the committee attended the online presentations of the new proposals in July/August. The design had been modified following the earlier local consultation and an application has now been formally submitted, as what may be assumed as the final design. ADRA proposes to write requesting that measures are taken to protect the structure from graffiti and to reduce its visibility with more planting.

A table of selected planning applications and decisions for the last year is appended.

PL/20/0401/FA St Leonards Parish Centre, Glebe Way Redevelopment of site to create a new multifunctional Parish centre, with café, day nursery building, replacement rectory, additional staff dwelling etc.	Application refused
PL/20/3239/OA Land between Bendrose Lodge and 139 White Road Application for outline planning permission for residential development	Application refused
PL/20/3564/FA 57-65 Sycamore Road (site of present Superdrug and Waterstones) Demolition of existing building and construction of building comprising 2 [smaller] retail units and 14 dwellings	Ongoing
PL/20/3844/FA 8 Sycamore Road [former TSB premises] Change of use to KFC restaurant and takeaway	Approved
PL/21/0130/FA Land at Magpie Lane, Coleshill Erection of temporary rural worker's dwelling and agricultural building for proposed rabbit farm	Application refused
PL/21/0463/RM Grass verge outside St John's Church, Woodside Road Installation of antennas, 2 equipment cabinets, 1 meter cabinet and ancillary development.	Approved
PL/21/1309/FA 44 London Road West Replace existing car showroom with Aldi store	Ongoing
PL/21/1863/FA 41 Sycamore Road Change of use to hot food takeaway - Papa John's Pizza	Application refused
PL/21/2021/FA 27 Clifton Road [see also below] Large scale extensions etc	Application refused
PL/21/2316/FA Land between Shardeloes Lake and A413 Amersham Road Creation of agricultural track	Application refused
PL/21/2229/FA Newlands, 24 Long Park Subdivision of plot and erection of detached dwelling	Application refused
PL/21/3824/HS2 Land adjacent to Amersham Hospital Erection of Amersham vent shaft headhouse buildings and associated earthworks, compound and site fencing and lighting	Ongoing
PL/21/3756/FA 27 Clifton Road [see also above] Large scale extensions etc.	Ongoing

Membership Records Update October 2021

Malcolm Flack

The area continues to accommodate many developments in recent times and we would like to welcome more existing or new families from households in the area that are not represented.

You may not know whether or not your neighbours are already a member, but do please spread the word about the association's existence and maybe you could assist us to swell our membership. Remember, numbers count when we are making representations on local concerns and matters of interest. We have some promotional leaflets available and or application forms if you are able to promote the association in your area or pass one on to a neighbour or friend. Our website has provision to allow the application form to be printed off as well.

At the time of writing we have 538 households on our register.

Finally, do please keep us informed of your contact details should they change, especially your e-mail address which does help us contact you by the easiest economical method. My contact details are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

HS2

In October Misbourne Environmental Protection (MEP) applied for a Judicial Review into the Environment Agency (EA) decision to grant HS2 permission to construct the Chiltern Tunnels. The application was made on three grounds: The EA - failed to consider cumulative impacts of the works; erred in law as regards interpretation of the Water Framework Directive with regard to temporary impacts; and failed to require a discharge permit in respect of the discharge of grout (containing Bentonite) into the freshwater aquifer.

Disappointingly, permission for a Judicial Review was refused.

Construction of the Amersham vent shaft has already commenced. It is expected that the tunnel boring machines will arrive underneath the vent shaft in January 2023. An application for planning permission for the vent shaft head house has recently been submitted. It is expected that construction thereof will commence in April 2024 and that construction should be complete by April 2025.



Chiltern u3a, based in and around Amersham, has Interest Groups offering a great opportunity to 'Learn, Laugh and Live' with other adults of all ages!

Cu3a is a Member-led organisation offering a wide range of physical, intellectual and creative interest Groups, regular speakers and social events. It is open to anyone in their 'third age' (i.e. no longer in full-time work or other full-time commitment).

Members can choose activities from approximately 100 interest Groups including everything from Ancient Cultures, Apple & Android Users through Drama, Dancing, Language and Music to Walking, Wine Tasting and Yoga. Groups meet in Member's houses or at locations around the Amersham area and provide a sense of community alongside intellectual stimulation and fun!

More than half of Cu3a's interest Groups have been operating during Covid restrictions by embracing technology and running 'virtual' meetings by using Zoom. Groups are also keeping in touch with their Members by e-mail, telephone calling and regular e-bulletins. We have also recently launched a Facebook page ([Facebook.com/chilternu3a](https://www.facebook.com/chilternu3a))

Most of our Groups are in the process of restarting face to face meetings where Members feel happy to do so. Some Groups plan to continue having virtual meetings for a little while longer and others are creating a 'hybrid' format where Members can participate 'in person' or from home via Zoom.

Despite being part of a 40 year old national movement with some 450,000 Members (Cu3a has grown to around 1,350 Members over 20 years) it is surprising how many people haven't heard of u3a. On 2nd June we celebrated 'u3a Day' and had a stand outside St Michael's & All Saints in Sycamore Road and produced for this and a wider publicity campaign a range of leaflets and flyers. We are sending these out to a wide range of local organisations (e.g. GP surgeries, CAB, Amersham Museum, Samaritans, local and parish councils) in the hope that we can change this, so please look out for them on notice boards and desks!

If you are already a Member, please 'spread the word' (and talk to your Group Convenor who can arrange for you to have a pack of leaflets for your friends and relations). If not, please visit our website for more information and details of how to join www.chiltern-u3a.org.uk.

Contributed by Christian Scott

Having rubbish removed? Don't pay cash!

Many of us are quite accustomed to paying cash in hand to have odd jobs done to the house or in the garden, but if you ever need to have rubbish removed this is the one time you should not pay cash.

Did you know that your rubbish is far more likely to end up fly-tipped if you pay someone cash to remove it? Bona fide waste carriers must pay a commercial tip when they want to dispose of rubbish. An anonymous "man with a van" has a strong financial incentive to avoid the disposal charge – by dumping your rubbish in the countryside.

And there is a sting in the tail. If Buckinghamshire Council investigates a fly-tipping incident and finds evidence that leads to a householder, a Council Officer will pay them a visit and ask them to provide evidence that they have taken reasonable steps to identify the person they hired to remove their rubbish and to ensure that it would be disposed of properly.

If the householder is able to provide evidence of the identity of the person who took their rubbish away, such as details of a bank card payment, the investigation will focus on the fly-tipper. However, if the householder has paid an unidentified person or persons cash in hand to remove rubbish, the Council will issue them with a £400 fixed penalty notice for failing in their duty of care. If the incident is serious, it might be escalated to a Court Summons, which could result in a criminal conviction and a substantial fine.

If you are uncertain about how to make sure that you are doing the right thing when arranging for someone to take away your rubbish, consider the Buckinghamshire Council S.C.R.A.P fly-tipping code:

S – Suspect all waste carriers. Do not let them take your waste until you are confident that they are legitimate. A professional waste carrier should happily answer reasonable questions.

C – Check that the waste carrier is registered on the Environment Agency's website.

R – Refuse any unexpected offers to have your rubbish taken away. If you suspect that someone who approaches you will be disposing of waste illegally, report them to the Environment Agency.

A – Ask what will happen to your rubbish and assure yourself that it is going to be disposed of appropriately.

P – Paperwork must be obtained: a proper invoice, waste transfer note or receipt, including a description of the waste being removed and the waste carrier's contact details.

We are grateful to Cllr Jilly Jordan, Deputy Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, for permission to reproduce this article.

Phishing Scams and Attempted Fraud

It can sometimes be difficult to spot fake emails and text messages. (Hovering your mouse over the sender's purported email address, or, with some software, clicking on the sender's address, will often reveal a gobbledegook address, or at least one that clearly is not that of a legitimate sender.) If you are in doubt, this is a good thing to check.

Be extremely wary of messages asking for personal information, such as bank account details. Legitimate organisations, such as banks, should never ask you for personal or financial information by email or text message. If you want to check that a message is genuine, telephone the organisation on a published 'phone number (not the one included in the suspicious message). Also be extremely suspicious of telephone calls inviting you to make investments.

Reporting suspicious emails can help the government and law enforcement agencies to remove malicious emails and website. You can report a suspicious email simply by forwarding it to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you receive a suspicious text message (e.g. purporting to say that you need to pay a fee for a parcel to be redelivered) you can report it by forwarding it to 7726 free of charge.

If you have lost money or provided information as a result of a phishing or other scam, notify your bank immediately and report the matter to Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk

Chesham & District Transport Users' Group ('CDTUG')

ADRA members will recall that I have been asked to prepare a short note for the past couple of years on the work undertaken by CDTUG and what we've been able to achieve and here is this year's report.

As mentioned in previous reports, the Step-Free Access ("SFA") project at Amersham Station remains our greatest success to date and we are delighted that it became operational earlier this year with a formal opening ceremony performed by Mimi Harker a local County Councillor and former Mayor of Amersham, on 29th June 2021. It was a fairly low-key affair attended by the Chairman and Secretary of CDTUG, various members of Amersham Action Group ("AAG") and the family of Josh Langley, who was himself physically disabled and one of AAG's most active campaigners for SFA to be installed, but who as I mentioned last year, unfortunately did not live long enough to be able to use it.



During the pandemic, CDTUG has been unable to hold face to face meetings and I have therefore resorted to issuing a Monthly Newsletter to keep members informed of what is happening with regard to our local public transport services. However, with effect from September, we have been able once again to use Chesham Town Hall for our regular meetings, so things are beginning to return to normal and the numbers attending our meetings have been encouragingly high.

As to exactly what's been happening with our local public transport, in short, with passenger numbers being severely adversely impacted by passengers being unwilling to travel and with many people choosing to work from home rather than travel into London to the office having been encouraged by the Government

to do that, finances of both London Underground and the local bus companies have been under extreme pressure resulting in some cuts in services. As the pandemic has eased, (thanks mainly to the success of the development and take up of vaccinations), passenger numbers are now beginning to pick up, but it is expected to be some time before they recover to pre-pandemic levels.

In recent months, we have seen frequent cancellation of Met Line services to Chesham and to a lesser extent Amersham, partly due to a shortage of drivers caused by retirements and a failure to recruit and train a sufficient number of replacements. In addition, record staff sickness levels have been experienced, which has exacerbated the situation.

CDTUG has therefore lobbied TfL regularly and forcefully, culminating in a Zoom meeting with its senior executives and we have also lobbied our new local MP and held a face to face meeting with her, who has proved to be very interested in our work and most supportive. So far as the Chesham Met Line services are concerned, this resulted in the provision of standby buses at the end of October, which swing into action each time there is a service cancellation, so passengers can be taken to and from Amersham to catch their trains.

We have all read and heard about a shortage of HGV drivers, which has been attributed to a range of factors which it is inappropriate to air again here, but suffice to say that employers have been offering recruits significant “golden hellos” amounting to £000’s in some cases and not surprisingly this has tempted a significant number of bus drivers to change profession, with the inevitable result that there has been a knock-on effect causing a shortage of bus drivers, which has resulted in service cuts.

Recent operational changes include the introduction of a new leaf fall timetable for the Metropolitan Line which will take us up to Christmas; and minor timetable changes have been made to a number of local bus services, including an Emergency timetable for Carousel Chiltern Hundreds services, fortunately excluding the 103 (High Wycombe to Watford via Amersham).

I trust you’ll find this information helpful and meanwhile stay safe and I extend my early wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a better New Year for us all in 2022.

Alan Wallwork – Secretary, CDTUG

Amersham Food Champions

The Amersham Food Champions scheme was launched in June 2021 to help individuals and families who are struggling in the local area. As part of the scheme, residents are invited to set up a food collection point on their own street. As a Food Champion, their role is to coordinate regular collections of donations from their neighbours to be taken to the Chiltern Foodbank headquarters. Once delivered the vital provisions help make up food parcels for vulnerable local individuals and families.

Susan, an Amersham volunteer, got in touch with Chiltern Foodbank and the Bucks Communities Team to see if she could help with the local food insecurity crisis. Susan signed up to be a Food Champion and has been collecting food in her local area on behalf of Chiltern Foodbank.

She said: "With Covid changing the way we shop and many people opting for online shopping, I wanted to help increase food donations for Chiltern Foodbank. Offering my community a local drop-off point means that anyone can donate food and other essentials easily."

The Amersham Community Board was set up in June 2020 and has been working with local partners, volunteers and residents to understand local need. Their data shows that nearly 3,000 residents in the local area are at higher risk of food poverty and by June, demand had increased significantly with +278% foodbank referrals being given by Citizens Advice. When Susan got in touch to find out how she could help, the collaboration between herself, Chiltern Foodbank and the Bucks Communities Team was born.

Diane Rutter, Chiltern Foodbank Coordinator said: "I was shocked to discover how many children in Amersham are being brought up in poverty and go to bed hungry. But I am heartened by the goodwill of residents like Susan who are doing something about it. Collecting food from your neighbours and bringing it to the food bank is such a simple thing, yet it makes a huge difference to the lives of people who are struggling."

Following the success of the pilot scheme run by Susan, other volunteers have signed up to become Amersham Food Champions, many involving their children, for example, by allowing the children to help deliver flyers to their neighbours, telling them about the scheme.

To find out more about the Food Champions scheme or to set up a scheme in your street email: foodchampions@chiltern.foodbank.org.uk or telephone 01494 775668.

Like and follow Food Champions on social media. Here are some useful links:

Food Champions on Facebook and Twitter respectively

<https://www.facebook.com/thefoodchampions>

<https://twitter.com/foodchampsbucks>

Food Champions on Chiltern Foodbank website

<https://chiltern.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/food-champions/>

Contributed by Susan Boshier

Amersham Action Group

The aim of the Amersham Action Group is to develop and progress projects for the improvement of the town's environment and enhancement of facilities. It has been going since 1995.

Amersham Action Group funds and manages some of the smaller activities from within Group resources. Our main aim is to encourage development and funding from the wider community, and pursue grants from other sources, such as the Community Boards.

We also keep track of activities which may have an impact on the town, for example: neighbourhood policing initiatives, planning applications and parking control proposals. We try to influence them to benefit our community.

If appropriate we also action surveys to try and find out what the community thinks and would like to see in their town. The AAG looks to take on projects which could benefit the Community, so is always responsive to new ideas which incorporate this.

AAG is also responsible for holding the annual Amersham Christmas Festival. This is a community event and we have live music, Street Markets a Santa's Grotto and street entertainment - family fun for all. We were unable to hold it last year, so we are really looking forward to this year's festival on Saturday 4 December from 10 to 5pm. Please come and join us.

For more information about AAG please visit:

<https://www.amershamactiongroup.org.uk>

Contributed by Cllr Jane Barnes, Chairman AAG

Learning to Jive in Amersham

Gosh, fancy getting into rock n' roll at 65! How did that happen?

Well my regular drive home would take me past the Amersham British Legion, opposite the Fire Station. One day, my eye was caught by a sign which appeared outside. The thing is when driving I only managed to read one line per drive-by so it took several weeks before I read it in full. "ROCK N' ROLL LESSONS, NO PARTNER REQUIRED £6". Being a bit of a rather self-conscious Dad Dancer and scared of embarrassing the family at the odd reception which involved dancing, I thought "You know actually this might be a good idea". After all, I like the music - Chuck Berry, Elvis, The Big Bopper. This might be just the job as my music awareness had stopped abruptly somewhere in the early 70's when I switched from early morning Kenny Everett to Radio 4 as part of my "time to get serious about business" mode.

The next thing I knew I was Old and had no idea what had happened music-wise in the intervening period. In a way I was like a beached whale and, in contrast to the sleek cool 70s creature in flares, a beached whale was probably what I looked like when I hit the floor to old favourites. Regrettably I have lost the cool sleek look, but probably still have the flares somewhere in the attic.

So, one Wednesday at 8pm Linda and I turned up at the British Legion to be greeted by Bill and Sandy, a very friendly couple who run the class. For £6 you get a basic beginner's lesson lasting about 45 minutes and for the rest of the evening you dance or chat. The class comprises about 40 others ranging in age from thirties to eighties, with the average being about 60ish, and commences with the men and women forming two separate circles facing each other. It doesn't matter if the numbers are uneven because after a minute the men are told to rotate clockwise to the next lady. That way everyone gets involved. This continues as the dance move is progressively explained. If you are new you are encouraged to introduce yourself as you go round. It's very friendly.

At the end of the lesson Bill plays a selection of rock n' roll music and you can practice the moves or get a beer from the bar – at quite favourable prices - and watch others dance. Even if you come as a couple you are encouraged to ask others up on the floor to dance.

We have been going for about 7 years now and it's a great way to meet people and have a bit of fun. We have also been on a few rock n' roll weekends with the friends we have met there, as a number of hotels put events on, usually featuring two live bands each night. Why not give it a try?

Contributed by David Flett

Amersham in Bloom

Steve Catanach, Town Clerk – Community, Communications and Services

As another rewarding year comes to an end, the bloom team - staff and volunteers - are busy ensuring that 2022 commences with an explosion of colour. This autumn, with the help of Stony Dean School, we planted 25,000 bulbs - tulips, crocus and narcissi. I can't wait to see the display in spring!

Despite a rocky start to 2021, we are proud of what we have achieved this year. Some of the highlights include:

Community tree plant – It was a pleasure to see so many residents, families and children participate in the community tree plant at Willow Wood back in May, with an additional 200 trees planted. Our legacy project - to plant 7500 trees as an extension to the existing mature wood - nears completion with the final phase planned for January (details below).

Wildflowers and pollinator plants – This year, as part of our commitment to increase pollinator habitats in a bid to reverse the current declining trend, we increased the number of pollinator-loving plants by over 20% compared to the previous year. We launched the Seeds for Bees initiative, in collaboration with the Amersham Community Board, Sustainable Amersham, Rotate Amersham and the Rotary Club of Amersham to encourage school children in Amersham to sow wildflower seeds in their gardens and schools. Our planted streets signs, which have become synonymous with Amersham, have not only increased in numbers but annuals have been replaced with pollinators. Similarly, some of our traditional annual plants in the Memorial Gardens were this year replaced with pollinator-loving plants.

Planters – A further four planters with trees were added to Hill Avenue and Sycamore Road, complementing the existing installations. These trees bring both environmental and social benefits, as well as encouraging biodiversity to urban areas, while creating a softer town centre.

Metropolitan No. 1 Display at Oakfield Corner

Our Metropolitan No.1 project at Oakfield Corner, in partnership with the leaders of the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group, and perhaps our most ambitious project to date, has now been completed and fencing removed. Two years in the making, this project has, perhaps, captured the imagination of the public more than any of our previous efforts. It seems a long time ago that Andy Honour and I visited the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre to see the real locomotive. Although I would never say this to a train enthusiast the original Met No.1 isn't a patch on ours!

In seriousness, the train is a wonderful piece of art which looks stunning on the newly revamped verge. The model and track were funded through donations and

grants, while the new path was funded by the Town Council. From the spark of an idea and hundreds of hours of research, planning and building, it is hoped that the project will not only create visual interest but also become an educational resource, highlighting the significance of the Metropolitan Railway in the development of Amersham-on-the-Hill. I have learnt so much fascinating history about Amersham during this project. It is fair to say that, without the arrival of the railway, Amersham would not be what it is today. When you look at the original maps of Newtown, which was the name given to the immediate area surrounding the station, it's hard to imagine how a scattering of a few houses evolved into the town that we know and love, even more so when you consider that the site of the display was mere fields.



Many people have asked why we specifically chose the Met No. 1 train for Oakfield Corner. The Met No. 1 steam locomotive was a mainstay of the Metropolitan Railway service to Aylesbury for twenty years so plays a significant part in Amersham's commuting history! The model on Oakfield Corner is half the size of the original locomotive and has to be seen to be truly appreciated - the attention to detail is astounding! If you haven't paid a visit yet, please pop down to Oakfield Corner to see her in all her beauty. Signage will shortly be added to provide more history and fascinating facts.

The Town Council is indebted to the leaders of the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group, in addition to many others who have helped bring this exciting project to fruition, including the London Transport Museum and Amersham Museum, and our sponsors: The Old Amersham Hotels Group, Hamptons International, Amersham and District Residents Association, Amersham MOT Centre, Amersham Action Group, Barnett Waddingham, Tesco (Bags of Help), The Rotary Club of Amersham, and Amersham Community Board (who match-funded the project).

Bloom Awards

Our efforts over the past year were duly rewarded with fantastic results in both the regional (Thames and Chilterns in Bloom) and national (Britain in Bloom) competitions. Despite the challenge of entering remotely via an application process and being concerned that our reports could never do the projects justice (with only the Memorial Gardens being judged in person), we are ecstatic with our results.

Thames and Chilterns in Bloom Community Awards

In the regional competition we entered the following projects: our tree planting initiative (including the legacy tree planting at Willow Wood), pride of place of the town centre following Covid, the design a flowerbed competition (working with young children and our partnership with Stony Dean School), and finally, our pollinator planting scheme.

We received 'excellent' for each of these projects – the highest regional award possible. To round off Amersham's success, Amersham in Bloom was also awarded gold for the Memorial Gardens.

Britain in Bloom

Amersham was awarded 'outstanding' (the top national award) in two categories (of the three categories that we entered) - one for our tree planting projects (Green Solutions), and one for our efforts to sow pollinators (Nature Friendly Gardening). This is an amazing achievement - made even more incredible when you consider that only 21 projects/entrants throughout the whole of the UK picked up a top award! Amersham joined an exclusive club, being one of just three towns, along with Penrith and Randalstown, to achieve two outstanding awards - a very special accolade.

The whole team - councillors, staff and volunteers - are incredibly proud of the results, with Amersham once again leading the way! These awards are a testament to the effort, desire, commitment, brilliance, and determination of all involved, as well as the support that we receive from the residents of Amersham. Thank you.

Community Tree Planting 2022

To mark the final phase of our Willow Wood legacy project, we have planned a community tree plant on Monday 3rd January from 9.30-11.30am. To date, we have planted 7,200 trees in the creation of Willow Wood (behind Stanley Hill cemetery) since its inception in 2012. The final stage will see a further 300 trees planted, completing the project. In addition, next year's community plant will form part of The Queen's Green Canopy tree planting initiative to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' to commemorate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. (You can read more about The Queen's Green Canopy here: www.queensgreencanopy.org.)

The benefits of trees have long been documented, and in the current changing climate, never has restoring our natural environment been more pertinent. So, come along with a fork or spade and help to make a real difference - one that we hope many future generations will benefit from. Thank you to Old Amersham Revitalisation Group for funding the trees.

Christmas Tree Recycling

Following the success of last year's Christmas tree recycling initiative, we are offering the same service again this year! For a £5 donation, the Town Council depot will collect your Christmas tree, convert it to compost using our Eco Green Shredder, and use the bi-product to mulch trees and flowerbeds around Amersham. Last year we generated six tonnes of material!

The depot team will collect from the local area on 5th-7th January and 10th-15th January.

To make a £5 donation, please visit www.bit.ly/tree_recycling or email info@amersham-tc.gov.uk with your name, address and preferred date of collection. All donations will go towards Amersham in Bloom projects.

Well, that rounds off this year's bloom update and what a fantastic year it has been, despite the challenges that a certain pandemic has thrown our way. We are incredibly grateful for all of the support we have received from the Amersham community and are looking forward to bringing more floral delights and eco-conscious, sustainable initiatives next year!

ADRA Committee

Email for all committee members: amershamdra@gmail.com

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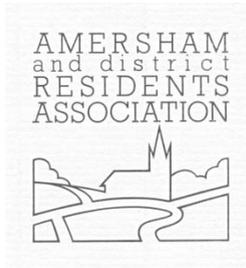
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Jon Jones
Ruckles
Westmount Avenue
Amersham
HP7 0AY

Christine Iles
5 Hyrons Close
Amersham
HP6 6NH



**Notice is hereby given that
the 2022 Annual General Meeting
will be held on
Tuesday 17th May 2022
in the Amersham Free Church Hall**

Doors open 7.30pm, meeting to commence 7.45pm