

# Chairman's (Secretary's) Report

September 2014

Firstly, a big thank you for coming out to our AGM this evening. Your support is most appreciated and we cannot thank you enough.

It's also good to see the usual councillors – the great and the good of Bicester. We really appreciate your support year on year. Thank you for all you do for our community; with such a vastly growing town, Bicester needs you.

I'll keep these comments short – not least because I'm not even the Chairman. We have exciting news on that front later.

I'd also like to thank those who've kindly agreed to contribute to tonight's proceedings:

- Mayor Lynn Pratt who'll be updating us on the Wretchwick Way junction with Gavray Drive
- Mrs Tomlin from Langford Village Primary School
- Keiran O'Brien from the Nightingale next-door
- And from the police: PC James Waterson and PCSO Kate Ford.

As many of you will know, our larger than life Chairman, Richard Augur has moved to Northampton to be nearer his children. Richard might only have been with us for 18 months – but it seemed a lot longer! Seriously, though, we must thank Richard for getting involved so wholeheartedly and making sound in-roads into our hall refurbishment scheme, the latest of which has been the windows and doors, which have been overhauled. Thanks to Micky Pearse – good job as ever.

Ted Kingston, our rock, who has been on the committee for 15 years now, kindly stepped up as Chairman for the past 6 months, which is all the more impressive seeing as he has been having a tough time with his health. We wish Ted a sound recovery – meetings are just not the same without him. Despite only coming out of hospital on Friday, Ted and Mya were keen to contribute to the meeting and have made cakes later.

The other big change this year has been with the position of Treasurer. Roger Winson has performed that role admirably and professionally over the past 5½ years. Roger is also Church Warden and Treasurer at Emmanuel Church, Bure Park (as well as wearing several other volunteer hats – which is why he cannot make tonight's meeting). He gave us a year's notice that he would be standing down, and it has taken much of this time to find a replacement... but it has been worth the wait as Caroline Cadbury has kindly volunteered to fill his big shoes. Roger and Caroline have been working hard on the handover for the past three months. We would like to minute a big thank you to Roger for all his hard work over the years, and we'd also like to welcome Caroline to the committee.

The rest of the committee has remained constant, with Bob Rudge doing sterling work with the day-to-day running of the hall – not least in looking after the heating system – along with a myriad of other jobs, like the LVCA website plus overseeing the distribution of the Langford Life. Thanks Bob.

Matt Philips here is our health and safety guru, an essential role in today's society. Matt also helps on the website side of things, as does Jon Spinage, whose contribution is also most welcome.

Although not on the committee, other stalwarts who keep the place running are Jayne Rossiter-Gill who keeps the hall in tip-top condition, and looks after the weekend bookings, Vaune Worsfold who does the gardening other odd jobs, and Micky Pearse who does the more robust building work – thank you all.

This just leaves our Chairman for the coming year. Dom Cotter, who has been a constant on the committee for many years. He has kindly volunteered to step up again as Chairman. But in a surprise late addition, we're getting two Chairmen for the price of one... Indeed, two Cotters for the price of one. To help introduce exciting new ideas, older brother Nick is also joining us. Dom and Nick will be co-Chairmen, which should be interesting, and exciting. Nick lives on Heron Drive and most of you will know him as an ex-councillor. Welcome Nick, it's good to have you with us. And thanks again to Dom for all your loyal service.

Our work is largely to look after the maintenance and running of the hall for the 300+ users who use it every week. I've a list here of the users: Langford Life.

I think you'll agree that it's a wonderful full and diverse list, showing just how much is going on in the community. Then there's the community orchard, the Green Gym and so much more.

Langford Village is a great community and it is a privilege to be part of this. So many people do so much in so many small and not so small ways – just look at the volunteers like Ellie Thompson who has been running the Scouts and Cubs here at the hall since it opened 23 years ago. Indeed, Ellie and husband Simon received their Silver Acorn Awards from the Scout movement, marking 30 years of involvement – you can read more in the copy of the Langford Life on your chairs... we like to call it the Ellie Thompson edition!

There are also the 30 or so people who deliver our occasional Langford Life and other things from time to time, like the leaflets announcing tonight's meeting. They all play their part and we are grateful to them.

I'd just like to mention one of these special people, Jim Hagan, who sadly died recently. Jim was a very active member of the community, being a leading light in the Millennium Cycling Club, he also drove the taxibus and was a faithful supporter of the Langford Life, contributing articles from time to time, and also advertising his Computer Services business in every issue – indeed, I'm sure he's helped countless people on Langford with their technical problems. A fine man and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

As I say, there are many people who make our community what it is – like the man on Langford who goes running at 5.00 am. Not only is that impressive enough, but he takes a plastic bag with him to pick up litter en route. We wanted to feature him in Langford Life, but he didn't want the publicity. What a fine man. And there are many others all doing their little bit, often silent and unknown, but which make all our lives better – thank you all.

We've plenty of ideas for more social events, litter picks, 'the big lunch' and other ways of improving neighbourliness and community spirit. This year we'd like to increase awareness and use of our website. I'd also love to introduce welcome packs with local information for all people moving to Langford, all new residents getting a knock on the door and a friendly introduction from one of the local welcome team. Interestingly, the Bicester churches take a freshly baked cake round to each new family who moves into Kingsmere... now there's an idea. There's even been a suggestion for a summer fair with competitions between old and new Langford!

OK, so some of these initiatives may be a way off yet, but it's good to have ideas, and to consolidate and build on the already excellent reputation and identity of Langford Village as the town of Bicester grows, seemingly exponentially.

There's lots we'd like to do, but we are all volunteers with a finite amount of time, so we'd love to hear from anyone who would like to help. We'd welcome new blood and fresh ideas on the committee. I know that Bob would also be delighted to hear from volunteers for distributing the Langford Life... and, hopefully, the welcome packs when we get them printed.

We meet for an hour or so on the third Monday of the month, and would love to hear from you if you would like to help. Either pop along to a meeting, contact us via the website, or speak to me or another of the committee members after the meeting.

Thank you for all your support – please stay for refreshments later if you can.

## **Wretchwick Way Committee Report for AGM**

This report is on behalf of Carole Hetherington Chairman of the Wretchwick Way Committee who sends her apologies for not being here in person to report back to you, unfortunately she already had a commitment in Oxford this evening.

Following last year's AGM a committee was set up of interested residents, local councillors and local police to take the topic of the junction on Wretchwick Way forward. The committee has 9 members in total.

Whilst we have not succeeded in our aims we have made progress, which I am pleased to report back to you.

Firstly I must mention the roadworks which were due to happen last week which suddenly disappeared, they have been postponed until 6<sup>th</sup> October. The work is to take off the surface of the roundabout, resurface it and clean all the chevrons around the roundabout. The work will take place during the night and they have said any noisy work will be between 8.00pm and 11.00pm. We as a committee cannot claim this as our success it was already in the pipeline and I know will please a lot of residents that have had issues at the roundabout.

Other progress made:

We have met with several members of Oxfordshire County Council Highways department and they have visited the site to see for themselves the issues. We have had a meeting with County Councillor Tim Hallchurch who has forwarded our case to the cabinet member.

The big stumbling block seems to be funding , so we recently met with the planners at OCC to discuss the plans for Bicester and to see if there may be funding available to improve the safety of the junction as we are likely to see an increase in traffic in the short to medium term due to the development of Graven Hill and the improvements to the railway. This meeting in particular was a very positive meeting and we are hoping that a safety survey of the junction will be carried out and a proposal for improvements developed. All of which is excellent news.

Other improvements we have succeeded getting are the replacement of all the 50 mph repeater signs along the road as these do not comply with the legal requirements for the road, a works order has been raised for this. My heartfelt thanks goes to Richard Kingshott who sits on our committee and used to work in the department and had the knowledge to identify the incorrect signage.

We have also succeeded in getting the road on the police mobile camera rota which once the signage is correct should happen and this will hopefully deter some of the speeders along the stretch of road.

We will continue with our dialogue with the council and feel as though we are talking to the right people and hopefully will succeed in getting some improvements along the road. It may

happen in phase's with the first goal to get white ladder marking along the length of the road to deter overtaking which is the same as between Rodney house roundabout and Tesco roundabout and has been very successful. We should soon have a proper costing for this work, which will allow us to be more focused in our conversations with OCC as we believe this to be an inexpensive first solution to improve the safety along the road.

We will continue our efforts over the next few months and the best feedback to you will be if the work gets carried out.

If you have any questions or queries please email me, and my email address will be available at the end of the meeting

*Carole Hetherington*