

## Chairman's Report for the AGM

April 11<sup>th</sup> 2022

Last year's AGM had to be held via Zoom because of Covid restrictions - and the closing sentence of the Chairman's Report expresses the wish that we won't be so dependent on Zoom for the next AGM. Crossing fingers seems to have worked because here we are here in person once again - welcome everybody!

Making plans over the past twelve months has been a frustrating occupation both at a personal and at a community level because you never knew whether what you had arranged was actually going to be allowed to happen. We started off in a modest way with a "grow the tallest sunflower" competition for children. On a Saturday morning at the start of May we set up a table next to the Sensory Garden and gave out sunflower seedlings. They were eagerly taken up. We took people's details so that we could remind them to report on progress. The sunflowers were measured at the end of August and the highest was a whopping 4 metres grown by Josh and Issy Winward – the prize was a "bug hotel".

Later in May we organised a "walk to school" event to raise the profile of our Safe Walking Routes to School campaign. Despite a generally terrible weather record in May the morning was sunny and groups set off from Brooklands and from the Cotton's estate to make their way to the two primary schools. Lots of children dressed up as superheroes – and some adults too – so it was a colourful occasion!. We invited Parish Councillors along, Suzy Akers Smith the Cheshire East Council Walking and Cycling Champion and the Press. We highlighted the problems of getting safely to school on foot – problems you all know only too well: lack of a convenient crossing point on Macclesfield Road and Chester Road, narrow pavements, large vehicles and speeding vehicles.

This is particularly the case on Macclesfield Road, so members of the Partnership supported Liz Alcock, who organised a revival of the Speedwatch initiative formerly run by members of the Parish Council. We were trained by Ade Chadwick, our PCSO, and did shifts with the speed gun on Macclesfield Road, Station Road and Middlewich Road. I think we comprehensively proved that speeding is an issue on Macclesfield Road - on more than one morning during school-run time we recorded well over a dozen motorists doing between 35mph and 40 mph down the railway bridge. Recent data shown to us from the Speed Indicator device corroborate this – its records show 70% of vehicles are exceeding the speed limit at that point. Cheshire East Highways nevertheless maintain that there is no problem, so we need to do more to convince them – maybe they are hoping that vehicles from 138 households on the Victoria Mills development exiting onto Macclesfield Road at that point will do the trick! The Speedwatch team will be out again after the Easter holidays and the Safe Walking Routes to School campaign continues – Peter will tell you more about that when he talks about Future Projects.

Together with the Parish Council we helped to fund an update of the South East Cheshire Cycling Action Group map. The last edition was created in 2017 and things have changed since then – especially around Congleton. Unfortunately the new maps are only being delivered next week so we can't offer you one this evening but copies will go into the library, the station, the Parish Office as soon as they are available. We do however have copies here of our 'Short Walks around Holmes Chapel' and the 'South Cheshire Market Towns Trail' As part of the update of the cycling map an updated detailed map of Holmes Chapel

was produced for the use of the Parish Council and residents. It is available on the Partnership website.

Holmes Chapel Partnership has become a Volunteer Coordination Point – otherwise known as a VCP. This is a post-Covid project run by Cheshire East to try and build on the surge of volunteering that took place during the pandemic. Together with the Parish Council we hosted a lunch in September to thank the Covid volunteers for their generosity and community spirit during the pandemic.

This time last year I wrote “We have however been bold enough to hold a meeting to explore options for the 2021 Christmas Market which we hope will take place as usual on the first Sunday in December” We are pleased we did, as the returning Market proved to be a roaring success. The centre of the village - closed to traffic for the occasion - made a wonderful setting for the stalls and the stage, leaving the Coop car park for fairground rides which were very popular with the younger residents of Holmes Chapel. It was a huge amount of work to get it off the ground and I have to thank the committee – in particular Pat McMaster for overseeing the entertainment, Karoline Peach for the publicity, Richard Garton for managing to raise a very healthy amount of sponsorship from local businesses and above all Peter Whiers who had the massive task of sorting out the stalls and much else besides. We are already planning for the 2022 Christmas Market – more of which from Peter later.

Santa put in his first appearance of the season at the Christmas Market, then for the following fortnight toured Holmes Chapel and the surrounding villages pleasing children and adults alike. Ten local groups shared £4160 as a result of these outings. Thank you to our Treasurer Richard Garton for organising the schedule and sorting out the cash and to all the drivers and supporters involved and once again to Peter for being responsible for the Sleigh and its upkeep.

All these things have been recorded in the Holmes Chapel Partnership Community Newsletter which comes out at the beginning of every month. Having appeared only virtually on our website when Covid restrictions were in force we are now distributing paper copies to the library, the station, local hostelrys and cafes for people to browse. I assemble the contents but I would like to thank Marie Bennett for knocking it into shape, Peter for sending it out and all those of you who contribute the articles and notices – without which there wouldn't be a newsletter. I would also like to welcome Gail Griggs onto our committee who will in future be responsible for maintaining the website and distributing the online Newsletter.

We are also pleased to welcome Liz Alcock and Katy O'Regan onto the Committee. Dorothy Davidson stood down this year to concentrate on Dementia initiatives – she has successfully revived the Memory Cafe and has started up another friendship event. Dorothy and I recently attempted to work with the Everybody Trust to get another Dance with Tea off the ground but that is still work in progress. Peter is standing down as Project Officer at the end of JUNE but we are delighted that he has agreed to take on the Vice Chairmanship. Gail will take on the IT side of the Project Officer role and we are currently recruiting two Events and VCP Administrators. Pat MacMaster wishes to lay down her secretarial pen to concentrate on getting Communicare up and running again, so I would like to thank her for all she has contributed to the Partnership. I would also like to thank our Parish Council representatives who are invaluable because we cooperate closely with the Council on many issues. If any of

you here would like to join us – it could just be to help deliver one project - we would be delighted to chat with you after the meeting.

Thank you everyone for coming this evening to our AGM.