

AGM 2019 – Chair’s Report:

Fantastic Fairfield

Another good year for the Community Association. The Association has helped maintain the local environment, enhanced community cohesions and reduced social isolation. The Association has brought people together and new friendships have developed.

Monthly litter picks

Most months a team of volunteers clear the grot from roadsides and the Recreation Ground. Recently Brenda Thomas has taken on the role of Litter Pick Coordinator. Thanks to all volunteers for keeping our community tidy.

Monthly lunches

Between 12 and 20 people support this monthly event, which visits different venues. Thanks to Pat Steward for arranging venues and coordinating this activity. The lunches bring the community together and helps reduce social isolation amongst some of our older residents.

Neighbourhood Watch

Even though crime numbers are low there is still crime taking place in our community. Residents are regularly reminded of SCAMs, Nottingham Knockers, the need to be vigilant and to take crime prevention measures.

With thanks to the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Parish Council, funding was secured to procure SmartWater property marking kits for every dwelling in the Fairfield Ward. The Community Association has facilitated the rollout of these kits during September and October, which currently stands at a 57% take-up. Residents are encouraged to claim their FREE kits. SmartWater “We Don’t By Crime” signs have been placed across the Fairfield Ward and early indications are that they have had an impact – in November & December 2017 there were 11 burglaries & robberies, in the same period in 2018 there were only 2 burglaries & robberies.

A big crime prevention deterrent is vigilance and looking after neighbours, especially the elderly and vulnerable. This is an area that we need to develop – encouraging elderly and vulnerable neighbours to adopt the Nominated Neighbour Scheme, to share crime prevention advice, to get to know all neighbours and to report suspicious activity to the police and to the Community Association (who are the verified Neighbourhood Watch Group).

Traffic

After months & months of lobbying, action has been taken to help enforce the speed limit along Stourbridge Road between the Swan Inn and the Recreation Ground with weekly visits by the Safer Road Partnership’s Mobile Enforcement Officer.

After years of lobbying by various individuals and village groups, dropped kerbs have been sited at the mini-island. Many thanks to Parish Cllr. Alan Mabbett for his persistence.

There is still more to be done, i.e. Enforcement between the mini-island and Mount Road, reducing the National Speed Limit section of Brook Road to 40mph, reducing the speed limit along Dordale

Road and Swan Lane, Traffic Calming engineering on Stourbridge Road and addressing the congestion caused by parked vehicles.

The Community Association has attended meetings and raised issues with Highways and our County Councillor. The Association continues to work with the Parish Councils Traffic Calming Working Group.

There have been many suggestions from residents proposing traffic management measures – e.g. speed humps, school crossing, average speed cameras, yellow lines etc. The Association has looked in to proposals and have considered 1. The County Council's road engineering response to date, 2. What impact the proposed engineering will have on the community 3. Any unintended consequences 4. Will it achieve the desired results? The Association is proposing that Speed Tables are adopted at the village entrances on Stourbridge Road and between School Drive and the Post Office. The Association is also proposing strategically placed parking restrictions that are time limited.

The Community Association would like to see progress with regard the proposal to extend the Recreation Ground car park. The Association appreciates the work of the Parish Council has put in to this proposal and the Association understands that assistance is required to navigates the District Council's Planning Officer's concerns regarding Green Belt Development. Anybody who has or knows someone that can assist us with the planning application to contact the Association or Cllr. Mabbett.

Remembrance 100

Events to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War was very successful, with an informative display in St. Mark's, which included works by children at the First School, and a Remembrance Sunday service attended by over 100 people.

Afternoon Tea

Last August a fantastic afternoon at the Village Hall, raising £576.00, shared between the Community Association (£278.00) and Libby Mae's Little Angels (£278.00). Huge thanks to all the volunteers for their hard work.

Walking Group

Last year, monthly walks were arranged during a weekday morning and evening. These walks were enjoyed by all. There was even a post-Christmas walk that was well attended.

Festive Fairfield

Numbers supporting Festive Fairfield were up, with more events taking place. The village Christmas Trees looked amazing, thanks to the Parish Council for funding the purchase of new tree lights. The school choir were a fantastic addition to Carols Around the Christmas Tree. The partnership events with the Swan Inn delivered a well-supported Outdoor Christmas Fair and a brilliant Breakfast with Santa. Attendance at the New Year's Eve Party increased threefold.

Dog Mess

Continues to be an issue, along paths and verges. On the Recreation Ground new signs have been strategically placed to remind dog walkers to pick up dog mess.

Coffee and Natter

A new initiative in January, whilst the Welcome Club were not using the Village Hall. Good support from school parents, low numbers from villagers. Hoping to repeat this idea when the Welcome Club are not using the Hall.

Planters

The planters at the village entrance on Stourbridge Road continue to be maintained by the Community Association. Thanks to the Parish Council, St. Mark's Church and residents for donating/helping to purchase plants and to the volunteers that help look after the planters.

Floral Fairfield

Another successful event last July, more homes contributing to the aim of creating ribbons of colour throughout our community. July 2019 will once again be Floral Fairfield and in addition to judging gardens, tubs and baskets that can be seen and enjoyed by people passing by there will be a Floral Collage Competition, which will be open to residents and non-residents.

Live & Local

Enjoyed by all that came to see the performances, unfortunately audience numbers are dwindling and after the next two shows the intention is to take a year's break from hosting these shows.

Newsletters

The quarterly newsletters are appreciated by many residents, sharing local & neighbourhood watch news. The newsletters have helped connect residents with the community where they live, the Neighbour Watch news is very much appreciated. Thanks to Carol Edwards and her team of volunteer distributors.

Website & Social Media

The Association developed a new website for the village and social media presence remains strong, with 696 followers on Facebook and 266 followers on Twitter. Social Media shares our good news to a wider market.

Recently a comment left in website's Guest Book by the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for Stockport "I have just visited your website, it's really well set up and very interesting and informative. Well done. I think it's amazing that your community has come together this way. It's an inspiration to all."

Residents' Meetings

Meetings are alternated each month between the Village Hall and the Fairfield Villa Club House. Numbers attending vary each month, from 15 to 30 residents. Feedback is that most residents find the meetings informal and informative, with residents being able to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas. For some residents, it is a chance to meet other villagers, thereby reducing social isolation. Many thanks to the Village Hall and Fairfield Villa for use of their facilities.

Partnerships

Where possible the Community Association supports and partners village groups, e.g. promoting events or using facilities. We are very grateful for all village groups that do so much for our community. The Association appreciates the support it receives from Cty Cllr Shirley Webb, District Cllrs Chris Allen-Jones & Margaret Sherry and to the Parish Council. Grant funding received from the Parish Council and the Divisional Fund has helped deliver the Association's initiatives.

There are challenges ahead:

- Ensuring that the 318 Bus Service, Café & Post Office is supported;
- Enhancing community cohesion and reducing social isolation;
- Developing an engaging Neighbourhood Watch Community;
- Scrutinising proposals to extend nearby quarries and to give feedback to the appropriate authority;
- Ensuring that any proposed school expansion does not have a detrimental impact on the community through increased traffic congestion and ensuring that there is clear movement for pedestrians along the footpaths;
- Continue requesting appropriate solutions that address traffic issues that deliver the required results and that have minimal negative consequences on the community.
- Engaging with District and Parish Council to ensure that any developments that may take place reflects the desires and needs of the community; and
- Financing the Association. We need to raise funds to help pay for all Association's activities.

Thanks

Fairfield Village Community Association is not one person or a small group of people. The Association is the Community working together.

Our Slogan is "Your Home, Your Village, Your Community". Every one of us plays a part in whether we succeed or not, the direction we travel, whether we provide a community we are proud of today and in years to come.

My grateful thanks to all those members of our community, whether they live, work or volunteer here, who makes Fairfield an enjoyable and safe place to live.

Please continue to engage with your reluctant neighbours and encourage them to be part of Fantastic Fairfield.