



# Fairfield Village Community Association

## Chair's Report – AGM 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The past 12 months has been another interesting journey for the Community Association, with the Community Association branching out into new activities as well as continuing existing services.

Volunteers continue to litter pick our lanes and open spaces each month, and the Association supports residents that have identified genuine local needs by contacting and lobbying the relevant authority. Thanks to Brenda Thomas and the Fairfield Wombles for their time each month and keeping our community clear of grot. Thanks to County Councillor Shirley Webb for funding our litter cart.

Last Autumn more bulbs were planted in the village. Over the last few years over 100kg of bulbs have been planted along Stourbridge Road, entrance to the Recreation Ground, along Dordale Road and Brook Road. Thanks to Bromsgrove District Council for funding the purchase of the daffodil and snowdrop bulbs.

Volunteers maintain our village planters, adding fresh plants, weeding and watering. Thanks to Pam & Trevor Jones for coordinating this work and to Belbroughton & Fairfield Parish Council for funding the cost of plants.

The annual Floral Fairfield competition is seeing more properties contributing to our aim of creating ribbons of colour throughout our community. We do hope that people will continue to support this initiative. Our thanks to Rosemary James for judging.

Last year we trialled a Floral Art competition, entries were very low, the standard of thought was very high. There was only adult entries and the winner was Mary Fairbain.

Every month members of the community gather for a lunchtime meal, visiting different eateries in the Bromsgrove area – thank you to Pat Steward for coordinating and booking venues. In response to comments on Facebook by people saying that are unable to make a lunchtime meal and could we organise an evening meal, we are trialling an evening gathering, a Spice Night on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. So far only people that come along to the lunchtime meals have registered their support for this evening event. Thanks to Carole Morris for coordinating this evening trial.

Along with Fairfield Village Hall, the Association supports the hosting of Rural Touring Theatre, last year we hosted two fantastic acts, in April Kel Elliott and her Band and in December The Snow Dancer. Attendance to see these shows were very low, feedback from the audience was very positive. We are hosting Scratchy Beard later this month, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March, do please buy your tickets from the Café and enjoy a fabulous evening. Our thanks to the café for acting as our Box Office.

Mentioning the Café, the Café changed hands in October. Kelly and her mother, Lydia, have changed the Café completely, it is a pleasure to pop in – do please support. The Café stocks milk and Fruitfields Apple Juice, which is produced from an apple orchard in Barnt Green. Sony & Kam still operate the Post Office.

Each quarter the Association produces a newsletter that is distributed to 385 out of 400 dwellings in the Parish Ward. 115 copies are shared amongst the Swan Inn, Fairfield Café, Village Hall, Fairfield Villa, Bournheath Community Centre, Nailers Arms and the Gate so that other people can pick up a copy – thanks to these businesses and organisations for their continued support, and a huge thanks to Carol Edwards and her team of volunteers for distributing our newsletters.

Fundraising has not covered our costs and our accounts will be presented during the Treasurer's Report. The Race Night was popular, filling the Club House. The Rock n Roll Bingo was a flop, people that did support this event did not know what to expect and were very pleasantly surprised. I will never forget Bernard Edwards doing the Birdie Dance and Mary Gibbs standing up and fist punching the air.

Festive Fairfield was a mixed success, the Snow Dancer (mentioned earlier) had a low audience attendance, Carols Around the Christmas Tree was more popular, we were joined by the school choir and everyone had an enjoyable time. The New Year's Eve party was poorly supported, those that did come left having a great time, full of food and the adults enjoyed the welcoming wine & uncorking the prosecco a midnight.

In April last year, after over 40 years, the Welcome Club stopped meeting on a Wednesday afternoon. The Community Association, since June, have been organising social drop-ins every second Wednesday, so far they have mainly been Coffee and Natter, we have made Bird & Bat Boxes that have been sited around the Recreation Ground and Spinney, played Musical Bingo and enjoyed Ping in the Community Table Tennis. This year we have programme of speakers or activities, which we do hope you will support. Our thanks to Bromsgrove District Council for help funding the bird and bat boxes.

Digital Isolation is an issue. Some people just want to know how to do some simple digital tasks and help is at hand on the second Wednesday of each month. The Community Association have partnered with Age UK and Tech Help is available, helping people to send a text, email, online shopping, downloading photo images and other basic tasks. If you need help do pop along. We are assisted by Steve Wright from AGE UK. If people do not use the service, then we will lose this service.

The Association supports activities that keep our community physically and mentally fit, promoting activities that are taking place at the Village Hall (line dancing, sequence dancing, Zumba & taekwondo) and, between April and October, organising rambles. Rambles are no more than 2 hrs in length and take place during morning and evenings. The post-Christmas ramble attracted several people, finishing their walk at the Swan Inn.

The BIG new initiative launched last September was Fairfield Flicks. With the support of the Village Hall and a grant the Hall had from the Parish Council, we are able to show the latest films and golden oldies using a HD projection onto a 5metre wide screen. Occasionally we show films that are on Special Release, that is they are not yet available to buy from the shops. The sound system fills the Hall.

Feedback has been positive, there have been comments regarding the sound being loud at times, unfortunately that is the Blu-ray and if we turned the music down people will not hear the dialogue – it is the same experience as if you were going to the cinema. The audience is attracting people who live locally or in the surrounding area. Many people are returning again and again.

Screening a film is not cheap. The licence is £99.60 plus the cost of the DVD or Blu-ray. Currently we are running at a loss. If we can get another 6 people to support each screening we can run at a surplus. Delivering Fairfield Flicks needs a team of volunteers, and our grateful thanks to all our volunteers and to Linda Garvin, our popcorn queen. Our volunteers live in Fairfield, Stoneybridge, Bournheath and Rock Hill – if you would like to be part of the team email [admin@fvca.org.uk](mailto:admin@fvca.org.uk)

Something else that was new last year was Picnic in the Park, the morning was wet and 15 minutes before the 2pm start there was consideration for cancelling the event. The rain turned to drizzle and at 2pm the drizzle stopped, the sun came out and the Picnic attracted approximately 24 people. The Club House bar was open, there was an Ice Cream Bicycle and adults and children enjoyed a variety of traditional games, including egg & spoon, sack race and

tug of war. There was plenty of laughter and everyone said they had a brilliant time. We will be having another Picnic in the Park in June, hopefully with better weather.

Residents gatherings on the first Saturday morning of each month, 10am – 11am, is a great opportunity for a Coffee and Natter plus the sharing of community information. We also share Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Prevention information – the videos that are screened have been found to be very informative. If you don't want to chatter you can play table tennis using our Ping in the Community set.

Since the rollout of SmartWater kits and the siting of signs across the Fairfield Ward there has been a drop in burglaries, but they still happen. Please review your home and vehicle security, don't leave items out or doors open for an opportunistic thief, do report suspicious to the police and the Community Association and do speak to your neighbours, especially when it comes to the many scams that are doing the rounds. If you live in Fairfield, Wildmoor or Stoneybridge and you have not received a SmartWater property marking kit, perhaps you are new to the area or you forgot to pick up a kit, do collect a kit from the Community Association.

Traffic issues across the Fairfield Ward are increasing. We will discuss the ongoing issues later and our response. I'd just like to say that after 4 years of lobbying the gullies along Stourbridge Road have finally been cleared. There have been comments regarding the Safer Road Partnership Enforcement Officer not visit the village, unfortunately his bike cannot be sited on the public footpath as he cannot block a pedestrian walkway, his bike has to be on a flat surface and with sight of oncoming traffic. Unfortunately, at the location he has been using there is a legally parked vehicle obstructing his view of oncoming vehicles. The Parish Council have agreed to fund a hardstanding area south of the mini-island that can be used by a Van to monitor and enforce traffic driving along Stourbridge Road from the direction of Mount Road.

Details of all our events are listed on the village website and promoted on the village Facebook page and Twitter Feed. Forthcoming events are listed in the newsletter and church magazine.

The Community Association is involved with loads of initiatives, some that I have mentioned, some that I have not. Please keep on supporting, get your neighbours to support us, this is YOUR Community. Without YOUR involvement we would not have a beating village heart, we would be akin to a private estate, called a village, with no spirit.

The Association works with many people and bodies to deliver services, activities and improvements that benefit our community. Sometimes we get what is needed – brilliant - and at other times we face brick walls. The Association's Committee works very hard for you, sometimes we do not get in completely right or what we do deliver does not meet people's expectations, we do try our best.

I would like to thank you for all that you do, volunteering and/or supporting activities, for being our eyes and ears and lobbying when the need arises.

Two BIG thanks that I do wish to record, to Parish Councillor Alan Mabbett and to Robert Garvin, our Treasurer, the counsel they give me and the support they give the community is invaluable.