



## Annual General Meeting – Chairman’s Report - 17<sup>th</sup> November 2018

This week we saw the BBC One Show Rickshaw Challenge come along our roads and it was wonderful to see the excitement of the children from Woolton Hill Infants and Junior Schools as Matt Baker and the team passed by. It is not often that East Woodhay is featured on a national television feature. So many adults too lined the streets, providing encouragement and supporting such a worthwhile cause.

Through East Woodhay Society membership and by using communication tools such as email and social media we can publicise these types of things and make sure that the latest news from the parish can be seen by as many people as possible. We are pleased therefore to have increased our paid membership this year, as we now have over 130 members, but we all want to have further reach.

Consequently, and as part of ensuring we comply to GDPR, we not only developed a Data Policy but we reviewed our purpose to make sure we are aligned to our overall community objective, looked at our constitution and refined the aims so that they are:

The East Woodhay Society works to benefit residents of the Parish by: -

- promoting social activities in order to encourage a community spirit
- campaigning on issues of local importance, particularly those involving planning and the environment
- undertaking activities which improve our local environment
- supporting a charity nominated by the membership.

So looking at the year in line with these four aspects, I'll first at social activities:

We have undertaken several events including a curry quiz at the Rampant Cat in January. The annual Crafty Craft was particularly successful this year with the team achieving a course record time. The weather this year was wonderful, and it did help enhance the day. The Barn Dance was a very enjoyable evening with a live band and ploughman's supper and the wine quiz is always popular, with a format which means even those who aren't that knowledgeable, and I place myself well in that category, can have a fun time.

If there are other events you think would work then do come forward to suggest them and help work with the committee on them



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As well as the ever-popular Christmas walk where we join with Highclere Society and the springtime Daffodil walk, the regular Friday morning Walking for Health walks have been going from strength to strength with regularly over 15 people participating and sometimes well over 20. Research by Public Health England has shown that walking is the nearest activity to ‘the perfect exercise’ and the walks are built around: building healthy bodies, having healthy minds, meeting new people and preventing illness. The team have highlighted additional walks which they could do if stiles were replaced with kissing or self-closing gates and we have worked with the Parish Council on this – the stiles within Hollington Farm have already been replaced.

Additional campaigning has involved working with the Parish Council on the need to keep hedges cut back alongside busy roads, for cutting back of growth alongside footpaths and to provide links to members on how to inform Hampshire Council on repairing potholes. Potholes are a major issue for rural communities as they not only are a ‘trip hazard’ and damage cars but they are a serious danger for cyclists.

We are working with the Parish Council on the spend of S106 monies following the Meadowbrook development. These are community monies following a housing development. East Woodhay Society is taking the lead on the Recreational Projects portion of money. Conscious to appeal to as wide an age group as possible we are working on the following: bench seats in the local area, a table tennis table, picnic table with chess/backgammon marked out and also outdoor gym equipment. We are also looking into the potential of a boules court.

We have also introduced some community features within Spectrum. Being part of an Area of Natural Beauty, our parish has a large number of great aspects to it and also people put a lot of time helping to enhance it. We want to encourage that community feel and to develop this by writing about it. We have covered Patricia Barnes, our Litter Warden, Gainsborough Stud, Walking for Health and coming up in the next two Spectrums will be features on The Chase plus there is an article on the Village Market in progress. We do have some ideas but please do tell me what you would like to see covered.

And lastly, underpinning a lot of what we do is to raise money for a local charity. Thanks to everybody for your contributions towards our nominated charity - The Rosemary Appeal. This has also been matched with a donation within Greenham Trust thus raising £1500 in total. The Rosemary Appeal has raising money for a new centre at West Berkshire Community Hospital, providing essential facilities, including day therapy, chemotherapy, renal dialysis, IV therapies and a CT Scanner. We look forward to presenting the cheque this evening to Dr Keith Endersby.

Let’s now take a look at the finances for the past year which Bill will take us through.