

Chairman's Annual Report 2011

We have arrived at that time of year when it is time to pause and reflect, to look back on the past year and update you with our activities; our plans and the challenges that lie ahead.

The opening of the new Community room was celebrated just under a year ago and it has been put to good use since then. The log boiler has kept us wonderfully warm during the cold winter and we are grateful to all who gave us wood.

You will have noted that we have decreased the Precept by a small amount, which we found we were able to do when preparing the budget for 2011/2012.

The Community Garden, achieved through an Awards for All grant as part of Sustainable Sunningdale was completed last summer and is now run by Graeme with the help of Brian King. Come and find out more, how to grow your own produce and manage the eco-system that is your garden. The garden is open daily and you can simply wander around and Graeme will be on hand at set times to help with any questions.

What fun the Eco-Circus was last September. It was preceded with Eco Workshops at four local schools to engage with and prepare the children and adults for the show. It was a family show combining clowning and comedy, music and artwork to encourage children and their families to explore how their actions in everyday life can affect the planet. There were two shows in a large donated marquee or 'big top' and even now the children still talk of the Eco-Circus – success indeed.

We were delighted that the Mayor of the Royal Borough, Cllr Catherine Bursnall joined us for the launch of The Official Guide last September. This has been received with great acclaim and our thanks go to Paul Diluce Brown for all the hard work he put into this project. The Mayor enjoyed her time with us and left laden with produce from the Community Garden.

Planning is led by Rodney Stubblefield and Jon Read and all applications are now accessed from the Boroughs planning website, so we had to prepare ourselves for this new approach. It certainly puts more work on Anne in

preparing for meetings, but we have adapted well and were able to plan for the equipment needed when work was in progress in the Community room. We would like to thank SPAE and especially Keith Streams for his input and help on planning over the last year.

The well tended standard of allotments is evidence of the hard work put in by most of the allotment holders. Last year the panel of judges awarded the William Pack cup to Fred Parfitt

Paul Smith was second and Eileen Ufton third

Sarah Clifford was Highly Commended

Derek Lake the Best Mixed Plot

Makiko Galbraith the Best Newcomer

Kate Webb and Jon Read continue with their ideas for improvements at Kiln Lane Cemetery and these have led to a general tidying up in areas.

Jamie and Shirley McCaul maintain and plant the rockery garden at the entrance and we thank them for all they do.

Shirley also plants and cares for the flower tubs in the Chobham Road and Sheila and Gordon Williams plant and maintain the flower beds at the Jubilee Clock along with the terraced garden. Thank you for all you do in making Sunningdale look cheerful and colourful.

We continue to have young people who gain work experience with the Parish Council with Graeme acting as their mentor. From last summer Nathan from Heathermount has been coming once a week and how he has grown in confidence during this time. He is such a good worker and willingly and capably tackles the jobs he is given. We are very proud of him and wish him well when he starts at Berkshire Agricultural College where he has recently been accepted.

The Christmas Celebration was a great success last year and the children found it such fun having the characters from Aladdin of the Quince Players with Aladdin switching on the lights. It was good community engagement. This year's event will be on the 2nd December.

So to the challenges ahead. Sarah has been telling us of Neighbourhood Planning which is now being implemented in Ascot and the Sunnings area, with significant implications on our capacity to undertake planning policy locally.

The Big Society is about a huge culture change. Localism and decentralisation are key. We have been actively engaging with our community, holding Big Society Focus Groups led by Neil Collin and Michael Crowe, and continuing with our sustainability agenda. At the fourth Focus Group there was a broad ranging discussion on volunteering, the nature of community and the leadership required to galvanise volunteers.

Big Society proposals are a challenge and opportunity that we as a community should grasp. As David Cameron said 'we need to create communities with oomph'. So let's put the oomph into Sunningdale!

Starting from the Spring holiday Tennis at the Rec is entering a new phrase where we have an agreement with Charters Tennis to establish the courts as a 'place to play', affiliated with the LTA and compliant with its standards. Membership will be encouraged, coaching will be available, and the aim is to increase community playing of tennis.

To link in with this there will be a Kiosk providing refreshments at the Recreation ground, run by Monica and open at all peak times including weekends.

There is a full programme of activities for the spring holiday creating a hub of community life and leisure activities, so see our Spring Holiday Newsletter and bring the family along for fun filled days.

As I draw to the end of updating you with our activities over the last year and look forward to the exciting and demanding challenges that lie ahead, I turn to our two staff who are a great team. Graeme who under Anne's eagle eye looks after the recreation ground, the cemetery and allotments and many other jobs. Graeme thank you for all you do.

Anne who carries out all the administration and ensures Council is fully up to date with all procedures. She investigates and prepares for all our new initiatives in preparation for the decision making process of Council. Anne thank you sincerely from us all.

Christine Gadd
March 2011