



Welcome and Farewell from the Chair Marion Oxley

Luncheon Club at The Bull



Welcome to the first Wheathampstead Community Group annual report. Because our activities and new initiatives have expanded so much, we felt the reading out of lengthy reports at our AGM was no longer appropriate. I can't profess that we anticipated Coronavirus and the need to hold a virtual AGM for the committee only, but this report does give us the opportunity to tell you what we have been doing between 1 May 2019 to 30 April 2020.

During the summer we had our Tea Party, AGM, John Bunyan Charity Day and Village Day in very quick succession. The Tea Party is a relaxed occasion giving us the opportunity to thank our wonderful volunteers and spend time just chatting.

Our AGM last year was attended by the Mayor of St Albans, Cllr Janet Smith, and the speaker was Stephen Cracker CEO of Communities 1st, which is now a key Herts County Council partner during the Coronavirus pandemic, and it has been helpful to have built a partnership with them.

Our plant stall on Village Day gives us the chance to raise money, meet new volunteers and distribute leaflets. The John Bunyan Charity Day is a wonderful co-operative event between St Helen's School, the John Bunyan pub and WCG bringing in people from throughout the district on a warm summer's day, to just have fun and raise money for the school and WCG.

During the winter we had our Christmas Appeal which once again raised a record amount and involved a record number of volunteer collectors: it is the ideal way to raise awareness of what we do, as well as raise money. For the first year we organised the Santa Sleigh runs, to the delight of hundreds of Wheathampstead children and adults. The Christmas Carol Singalong with the wonderful Abbey Gateway Orchestra and our Master of Ceremonies Annie Brewster was a sell-out, despite having to change the date because of the election. The first event of 2020 was our winter social at the John Bunyan pub which was greatly enjoyed by many of our long-standing and new volunteers.

continued



Co-Head Teacher of St Helen's School, Kaye Healy, accepts Easter eggs donated by The National Trust, presented by Mike Greensmith

In mid-March, following a meeting called by Rev Richard Banham, WCG became heavily involved in the Wheathampstead rapid response to Coronavirus - Wheathampstead Support For All. WCG Treasurer Mike Greensmith, Secretary Chloe Priest Griffiths, Vice Chair David Johnston and Community Secretary Bel Bluemel have all been working hard to try to ensure that anyone in the village receives help in whatever way they need it. We have been and continue to work very successfully in partnership with the Parish Council, St Helen's Church and the Patient Participation Group.

One member of our committee is retiring after 27 years of WCG volunteering - Ann Rudeforth BEM - who until relatively recently, ran our transport service almost single-handedly. The WCG transport service is a vital lifeline for over 160 elderly people anxious about getting to medical appointments. Ann is known to so many of them for her caring efficiency and is greatly admired and respected by all our volunteers.



Mike Greensmith presents a £1,100 cheque to David Law, Chair of Wheathampstead Thursday Club

Luncheon Club

The Lunch Club, for over 75s living alone, continues to be a success story with 16-23 people enjoying a two-course meal at the Bull and an opportunity to meet friends, on the first Wednesday of each month. Our drivers provide transport and we are grateful to the Bull for continuing to subsidise the lunch.
Maggie Ferguson



Christmas Singalong



Volunteers' Tea Party, July 2019

I am standing down as Chair at the AGM, although I hope to remain as a member of the committee for another 12 months. I am looking forward to proposing David Johnston as Chair at our virtual AGM. I have always admired David's work as Chair of the Parish Council – his clear thinking, commitment and knowledge of Wheathampstead and its residents makes him an ideal Chair of WCG and I was delighted when he agreed to join our committee and become Vice Chair.

I have had a wonderful 12 years as Chair, it has been a privilege to get to know and work with so many caring, hard working committee members and volunteers. Together we have achieved a great deal but there is still so much to do and I am confident that under David's chairmanship and with the support of our great committee and wonderful volunteers WCG will continue to go from strength to strength.



Internet Café

The Internet Café moved along with the new library, which presented some interesting challenges. But the usual clients adapted fairly quickly. We've been seeing quite a number of people looking for help setting up their mobile devices and we now need fewer PCs. We have sold two, to allow people to continue online when they get home. There are far more people are using tablets now and in the future I'd suggest that we focus more on these. We now have sufficient helpers in a rota to provide help for most issues. Chris Foreman



Vice Chair's Report

David Johnston

Many will associate me with Wheathampstead Parish Council. I have been a Parish Councillor now for nine years and Chair of the Council for seven. I am not seeking re-election as Chair this year (29th May) so I can become more involved with the Community Group. The WCG Board recently appointed me as Vice-Chair and I am delighted to become part of this very successful team.

I am a great admirer of what the WCG has achieved over the years and, in particular, Marion's endless energy and fantastic achievements in growing and funding this amazing organisation. It is a great credit to Marion and the community group that it was the lead contributor in the "Support for All" project to help vulnerable residents during the ever-present Covid19 crisis. There is no doubt that, without WCG's help, the programme would not have been implemented

nearly as quickly. Having said that, many other organisations and individuals also played an important part in making the Covid19 response successful – a mark of a real community working together and something the WCG excels at.

WCG makes a major contribution to our community, working to help those in need. "If it 'aint broke, don't fix it!" as the saying goes. However, as the Covid19 experience has shown, there will always been the need to adapt and respond to a changing world. Whether it's the introduction of new technologies to help our efforts or providing new services for our clients, there is always scope for change. We are in the lucky position of having a healthy bank account, the challenge is to use those funds to best effect for the betterment of our clients.



Secretary's Report

Chloe Priest Griffiths

My first year as Secretary has been very rewarding and, in the last few months, rather more challenging than I anticipated, thanks to the Coronavirus outbreak. I have enjoyed meeting many of the volunteers at various events, and through email conversations. I hope to meet you all eventually, once we are allowed to congregate again.

Since September we have recruited eight new volunteers, giving us a total of 177 volunteers at present (a few have moved away). We are able to accommodate every reasonable request that comes our way, so we are well supplied with people at the moment. If you add the people who help collect donations for our Christmas Appeal (39) and the Santa's 'elves' (41), we have 257 people who have given up their time to support WCG this year.

I've helped assemble the list of 180 new volunteers recruited to help residents during the Covid-19 pandemic, through Wheathampstead Support for All, and communicated with them to help ensure a co-ordinated approach.

I oversaw the design and print of several leaflets to promote WCG and our work, mainly to spread the word to those in need who may not have known about us. I have also put together this report (with the help of a talented designer!).

Thanks to James Finlay for processing DBS applications so efficiently, and to Sally Bigland for maintaining the volunteer database – which have now moved online, for better data quality.



Transport Secretary's Report

Ann Rudeforth

and Farewell

During the past year we have made 334 trips for medical appointments to help Wheathampstead villagers. They are as follows:

Venue(s)	No. of Trips
Wheathampstead, Surgery & Dentist	39
Harpenden, Red House, Surgeries, Dentists & Spire	43
St Albans Hospital	78
Hemel Hempstead Hospital	19
Lister Hospital	9
QE2 Hospital	24
Watford General Hospital	15
Luton & Dunstable Hospital	82
Mount Vernon Hospital	4
Other venues	21

Usually, the Village Surgery is the most visited but this year Luton & Dunstable Hospital has had more than twice the number, in spite of cancellations from the end of March. A few requests have been made recently for more serious conditions. One driver has been taking a client shopping every week for about two years and others will do occasional shopping trips.

Following lockdown and, mainly due to their ages, only 10 of our 48 drivers are available at present. I would like to thank the drivers for their care and for helping clients when needed. We have nine organisers who work for two weeks at a time to make the necessary arrangements. They are Liz Bull, Maria Denham, Val Hughes, Lesley Hyams, Bryn Jones, Anne Morris, Marion Oxley, Marion Oxley (Chair) and Susan Ward. Many thanks to them.

Transport is offered seven days a week and a driver is usually available for an evening or weekend appointment when necessary. Some of you may know that our transport system is soon to be computerised. The current system may still be used by those clients who prefer it. I thank my husband, John, who has done all the associated computer work for many years. We receive favourable comments about our service and are fortunate to have so many willing volunteers.

After 27 years of working for the WCG both as a driver and their Transport Secretary, I am now standing down. I have really enjoyed the work; getting to know so many lovely people in the village, some of whom are now friends. Best wishes to you all.

Companionship Secretary's Report

Clare Corcoran

The Companionship Network scheme continues and at the present time we have seven Residents who are being visited by Companions. There has been a fair amount of movement during the last year with new or replacement Companions and four Residents leaving the scheme. Some of these partnerships are now well established and have been going for 2 and a half years.

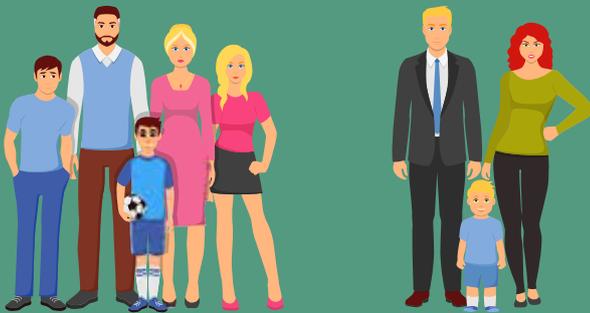
Some of our Residents have enjoyed various social activities within the Community during the past year. These have included a Summer Tea Party organised in August by the Wheathampstead Churches Together Association, the Beech Hyde Christmas Nativity and WCG Christmas Carol Concert.

We continue to receive referrals through various local support groups. If a referral requires more support than the scheme is able to provide, it is passed onto another association who may be better equipped to be able to assist. We continue to work alongside and build relationships with these local support groups to ensure we can jointly serve our local community.



Community Secretary's Report

Bel Bluemel



Sources of Referrals

Over the years we have built good relationships with many organisations. We have also encouraged anyone in difficulties to contact WCG direct and this year have established a dedicated WCG Community Services Helpline. Consequently, our referrals come from many different sources, including:

- Beech Hyde School
- Family Workers
- The St Albans Food Bank
- Health Workers – where the family breadwinner is recovering from illness
- Inspireall – from the St Albans Family Centre
- Local Residents – neighbours who have identified residents in need of our assistance
- Members of the WCG Committee – who have been made aware of people in need
- Previous clients – returning for help when problems return
- The St Albans and Harpenden Friendship Scheme
- St Albans Old Peoples Trust
- St Helen's Church
- St Helen's School
- The Wheathampstead Playgroup
- Wheathampstead Support for All Initiative

Many thanks to David, Mike, all the Committee and Volunteers for all their fantastic support throughout the year and, of course, to Wheathampstead residents who donated so generously, enabling these referrals to be carried out. Also, I would like to say a really special thank you to Marion and Ann for all their incredible support over the years. It has been greatly appreciated.



Help provided

I contact and meet with everyone who is referred to us and identify how WCG can help them. For each, I make recommendations and agree an action plan with the WCG Trustees. Our help can vary from a few pounds worth of Tesco vouchers to help buy essential foodstuff through to major pieces of household or electronic equipment. Some examples of how we have helped residents and groups in the village are:

- Funding for two ipads for an education facility
- Financial assistance for children's swimming lessons/school trips
- Financial support for childcare fees when parents find themselves in difficulties
- Rail tickets for travel to a London hospital for medical appointments
- New spectacles for a toddler
- Household repairs
- Hedge cutting
- Tesco and Food bank vouchers for families who cannot afford basic groceries
- Payment of Gas/electric bills for families in crisis.
- Assistance towards funeral costs when families are in financial difficulties
- Essential Furniture and White goods. If furniture and appliances are required, we supply good quality, second-hand goods
- Assistance with shopping
- Arranging the supply of walking aids
- Arranging 'Meals on Wheels' for vulnerable people
- Supporting families during the Coronavirus crisis when wages and Universal Credits were delayed
- Also during the current crisis, delivering food parcels and Easter eggs to the needy, as donated by other generous organisations





Marketing & PR Report

Morwenna Ellis

2019/2020 has continued to see us raising awareness of WCG and our work in the village which in turn has meant we have seen an uplift in both financial donations and request for services.

By utilising our social media channels we have managed to recruit new volunteers to support various aspects of our services. This raise in profile has also meant that the diversity of our clients has expanded, now supporting individuals with varying needs, local groups such as Wheathampstead Playgroup, and all of the other early years settings in our village (Beech Hyde Nursery, Beech Hyde School and St Helen's School).

We have redesigned our leaflets to try to communicate the broader services we offer to the community to ensure that people of all ages realise that they can contact us for assistance.

We currently have 380 followers on Facebook and this platform is used to engage with our followers and for them to contact us for help or direction. It's a great way of communicating with local residents and building our profile. We regularly post on the page about WCG events and these appear popular with our followers.

Our Christmas appeal once again raised a record amount of money which was made possible by the volunteers who distribute and collect the donation envelopes in the village. We'd like to thank all of our fabulous volunteers for giving up their time and assisting us with the appeal; it's a huge team effort and it has certainly paid off.

Santa's Sleigh Report

Louise Canfield & Lucinda Pilkington



One of Santa's 'elves' December 2019

Our 2019 Santa's Sleigh outings were a great success and epitomised village community spirit. Over six nights (Lights Up Grotto and five sleigh runs) we covered much of the village with our group of volunteers and collected an astounding £2,416.74 against which we were able to claim £600.21 in gift aid, giving a grand total of £3,016.95!

As a committee, we decided that the Santa Sleigh collections should continue to support the Wheathampstead charities that Rotary in Harpenden (RiH) had supported when they administered the Santa Visits to Wheathampstead in previous years, the 2019 funds collected were therefore shared as follows;

- £550 to Macintyre Homes
- £1,100 to The Wheathampstead Thursday Club
- The remaining £1,009.13 to be retained by Wheathampstead Community Group to be used specifically for supporting those who cannot afford school trips/school uniforms and for donations in support of families

As this was the WCG's first solo year running Santa's Sleigh some expenses on initial set up costs were incurred this included high vis tabards, walkie talkies, card reader and new decorative items for Santa's grotto which totalled £357.82. We anticipate expenses for the sleigh runs to be considerably lower next year as there will be little investment in equipment required, however, it has been agreed that we set up a restricted fund and each year we will allocate £300 for maintenance from the funds that the sleigh raises.

Our Follow Santa Wheathampstead Facebook page was popular and gained quite a following. We intend to use this again next year.

Our utmost thanks to; Jamie Burrows at Sandridgebury Farm for kindly storing the sleigh, the PPL PRS for issuing us with a 100% discounted music licence, our fantastic team of volunteer elves and of course... Santa!

Treasurer's Report

Mike Greensmith

Financial Summary

Wheathampstead Community Group

		Year to date:	30-Apr-20	30-Apr-19
			£	£
INCOME	Collections & Donation	Annual appeal	9,155	8,768
		Santa Sleigh Collections	2,417	
		Collection box proceeds	178	305
		Donations from individuals	3,944	92
		Client Contributions	10	55
		Donations from Organisations	843	1,600
	Grants - from:	Wheathampstead Parish Council	670	673
		Other	4,340	294
	Events - Proceeds from:	Village Day Plant Stall	317	215
		John Bunyan Charity Day	2,510	1,917
		Carol Singalong	580	556
		Other	-	-
	Other Income	Internet Cafe	25	75
		Gift Aid	2,690	2,424
		Investment Income	1,546	932
Total Income			£ 29,226	£ 17,906

Financial Year 1st May 2019 to 30th April 2020

		Year to date:	30-Apr-20	30-Apr-19
			£	£
EXPENDITURE	Direct Charitable Expenditure	8,912	4,730	
	Fund raising costs	1,533	672	
	Charity running costs	3,485	3,058	
	Total Expenditure	£ 13,931	£ 8,460	
Excess Income over expenditure		£ 15,295	£ 9,446	
Gain on Investment Valuation		(4,915)	(1,174)	
Total Gain in Year		£ 10,380	£ 8,272	
As at:		30-Apr-20	30-Apr-19	
ASSETS	Investments	25,424	22,339	
	Cash in Hand and at Bank	24,076	16,781	
		£ 49,500	£ 39,120	

WCG's financial activity has increased substantially year on year. Nevertheless, our financial position remains strong. Incredible fundraising remains the key to WCG's ability to provide the levels of support that it does across the parish. The generosity of our community never ceases to amaze us.

Record levels of support are described below:

- The Annual Appeal raised £9,155, another record. With gift aid that can be claimed against this, the total rises to £11,232
- Grants of £2,340 from the St Albans Old Peoples' Trust and £2,000 from Hertfordshire County Council which helped us to fund the Wheathampstead Support for All initiative. Thanks to these organisations for their support
- Individual donations outside the Annual Appeal were £3,944, mainly in direct support of our activities around Wheathampstead Support for All
- The John Bunyan Charity day raised £2,510, £2,880 after gift aid, net proceeds were shared with the Friends of St Helen's School, who helped organize the event. Many thanks again to the organisers
- Santa Sleigh collections raised £2,417, rising to £3,017 with gift aid. Net proceeds from the Sleigh collections are shared with the Wheathampstead Thursday Club and MacIntyre Homes, Wheathampstead
- WCG's investments generated £1,546 in interest

£8,912 was expended in Direct Charitable Expenditure in 2019/20, including:

- £4,089 spent in direct financial support of those in need. This includes support given to families in need via the local primary schools
- £4,823 donations to local organisations, including sharing of the fundraising described above

At 30 April 2019, the total assets of WCG amounted to £49,500.

I would like to thank Beverley Turner of Lamburn and Turner Accountants for again acting as our independent Examiner. Please contact me if you would like to see WCG's full report and accounts.

WCG 2019-20 In numbers



Sources of Funding 2019-20

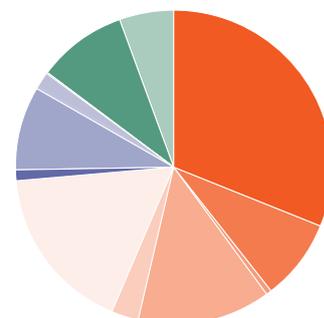
Collections & Donations (excl gift aid)	
Annual Appeal	31.3%
Santa Sleigh Collections	8.3%
Collection box proceeds	0.6%
Donations from individuals	3.5%
Donations from Organisations	2.9%
Grants from other organisations	17.1%

Events - Proceeds from:

Village Day Plant Stall	1.1%
John Bunyan Charity Day	8.6%
Carol Singalong	2.0%

Other Income:

Internet Cafe	0.1%
Gift Aid	9.2%
Investment Income	5.3%





Wheathampstead
WCG
Community Group

www.wheathampsteadwcg.org

Registered charity no: 269899
Registered address: 33 Ash Grove,
Wheathampstead AL4 8DF

Chair: Marion Oxley
Vice Chair: David Johnston
Treasurer: Mike Greensmith
Secretary: Chloe Priest Griffiths