



## Welcome from the Chair

### David Johnston



Year 6 pupils at Beech Hyde with their stationery packs

### Welcome to the Wheathampstead Community Group's annual report for the year 2020-2021.

Because of Covid many of our events this year have been severely curtailed; no Tea Party, Charity Day, Christmas Sing-Along, Santa's Grotto or plant stall at Village Day. However, we have been able to continue supporting families and individuals in the village despite the restrictions.

We have been a key player in the "Wheathampstead Support for All" initiative when a number of village organisations came together to ensure help was available for those in our community who were most vulnerable. When numbers requesting help reduced, we absorbed the work as part of our service offering. We have yet to see the lasting legacy of the pandemic, but rest assured, we are here to provide what help we can to those affected.

Many in the village will know of David Law and the tireless work he has put in on behalf of the Thursday Club for the elderly

and disabled. David and a couple of his committee came to the sad decision that it was time to retire from their role running the club and approached us about helping to keep the club going. As a result, both our Executive Committee and the Thursday Club's committee agreed that it would be in the best interest of the club if it came under our umbrella. We are pleased to announce that Peter Woods will take over running the club and has joined our Executive Committee. We're also pleased to announce that (restrictions allowing) meetings will resume in September.

Our transport section has struggled a little as many of our drivers have been self-isolating and that has put a strain on those remaining drivers and the transport organisers. We hope that as lockdown eases and the take up of the vaccine increases, the problem will reduce.

continued





Treasurer Mike Greensmith and committee member Louise Canfield presenting year 6 pupils at Beech Hyde with stationery packs

## Luncheon Club

We haven't able to meet since March 2020 due to Covid but hope to restart in the near future. Watch this space.



## Internet Café

The Internet Café has not taken place whilst the Community Library has been closed. It is unlikely to restart in its previous form. Our thanks go to Chris Foreman and Alec Bull who ran the Internet Café over many years. We are working with another local charity to provide IT training in the village in the future.

We are providing stationery packs to each of the 86 Beech Hyde and St Helen's school leavers, these being required for their move into secondary school. The packs contain over 30 items including a scientific calculator. We also provided Beech Hyde School with the Jigsaw learning aid for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) education and for St Helen's we have funded some railings and play equipment for a new infant play area.

There are two other new activities we are working on. "Welcome to Wheathampstead" is an initiative to welcome people to the village and point them in the direction of clubs and services that are open to residents. "Accessible Wheathampstead" is an initiative to improve the accessibility of play equipment particularly for those who use wheelchairs. Somewhat related to Accessible Wheathampstead, the Executive Committee is supporting Iain Begg's initiative to improve the cycle routes in and around the village. We have provided a small grant and Iain participates in our meetings.

At a personal level and Chair of WCG, I am so proud of and amazed at the dedication of our volunteers to their chosen roles. At a time when many are themselves under the stresses of lockdown, home schooling and job uncertainty, we have continued to deliver to those in need in our community. My only regret is that, because of restrictions, I have been unable to meet as many of our volunteers as I would have liked to thank you in person. We were unable to hold our main fund-raising activity this year so we are also very grateful to those who have made a contribution to our coffers.

**"Thank you to the community group for these. A really lovely and generous thing to do for all the village children starting in Y7."**

Beech Hyde School Parent

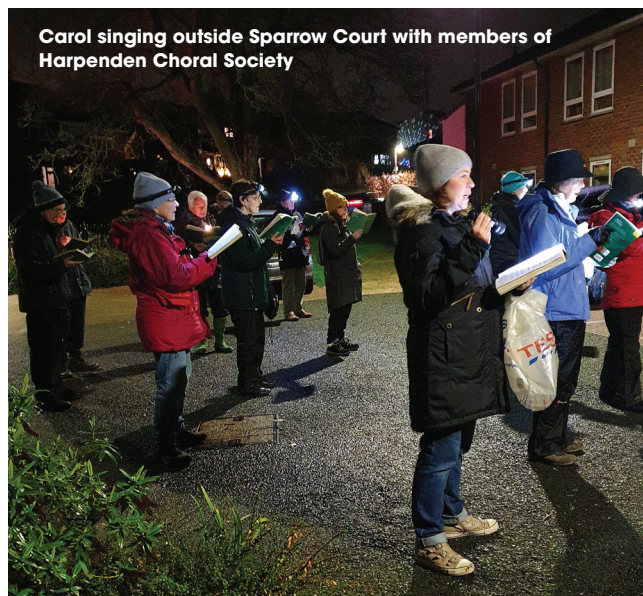
**"This is such a lovely gesture. My daughter is using her set right now. Thank you WCG."**

Beech Hyde School Parent

**"I am writing on behalf of the residents at Four Limes to express our heartfelt thanks for your wonderful outdoor carol singers event. After what we all know has been a very difficult year, particularly for the many vulnerable people who live here at the Limes, this event was joyful and for that we thank you so much."**

Meg Middleton  
Chair of the Four Limes Residents Association

Carol singing outside Sparrow Court with members of Harpenden Choral Society





# Thursday Club Report

## Peter Woods

Following the acceptance by the WCG Executive Committee of the proposal for the Thursday Club to become part of the Wheathampstead Community Group, we contacted all members and helpers to let them know of the organisational changes and to assure them that the Thursday Club would continue starting, hopefully, in September. At the same time, we asked all helpers to indicate whether they were happy to continue in their support. All members were delighted with the news and are looking forward to when the club resumes. The response of the helpers was also encouraging, with the majority confirming their willingness to continue.

Our booking at the Mead Hall has been confirmed from 2nd September onwards subject, of course, to Government advice and Women's' Institute policy.

In the meantime, we are pressing ahead with all the necessary arrangements, to enable us to be ready for 2nd September.



**"This is a fabulous organisation. We are so lucky to have it in Wheathampstead."**

Wheathampstead Resident

# Swan Song

## Marion Oxley

I know this is the wrong time to be leaving the WCG Committee because our great team has so many new projects and ideas to support our village, but I know David, Mike, Chloe and the whole committee will ensure their successful outcome. I would just like to thank everyone who has been on the committee, been a volunteer or supporter of WCG during the last 13 years, it has been a real privilege to work with, and become friends with, so many kind, generous, committed people.



# Secretary's Report

## Chloe Priest Griffiths

'Unusual' doesn't quite do justice to the upheaval we have all been through since last March. We saw a surge of new volunteers in the village as the first lockdown unfolded and a new group, Support for All, was established to channel the offers of help towards those who needed it.

Some of these volunteers have now become part of WCG as things have opened up again. Whilst we couldn't run the annual appeal in December 2020, we kept up our profile with a Be a Friendly Neighbour at Christmas campaign, sensing that this would be a particularly difficult time for people isolating or alone.

We also arranged carol singers to serenade residents in sheltered housing around the village and sent hampers to carefully identified vulnerable individuals.

Some of us on the committee took GDPR training to help improve how we collect, handle and store data, for volunteers and clients. Thank you to everyone who confirmed we can retain your details – if you don't think you did this, just drop me an email at [wheathampsteadwcg@gmail.com](mailto:wheathampsteadwcg@gmail.com). This will be my last AGM as we begin the search for a new Secretary. Thank you to all volunteers for the magnificent job you do and I have enjoyed meeting many of you in the last 2 and a half years.





# Transport Secretary's Report

Maria Denham & Dexter Ghelfi

Well the first year of looking after transport and trying to fill Ann Rudeforth's shoes has been a little harder than expected. Three lockdowns and additional Covid safety precautions have added to the challenge. Despite most of our drivers having stepped down, either temporarily or permanently this last year (mostly due to Covid fears), we have still been able to keep the service running. We provided additional PPE to our drivers and useful guidance on staying safe, so that those that wanted could continue to help. But as hospital and other medical visits have started to resume their normal levels, we still have only a small number of drivers who have reactivated and a couple of new drivers to take these journeys on. Something we are trying to address with a recruitment drive.

The new computerised booking system (Optimise) has helped a lot and has allowed us to remotely train new transport organisers to work together in booking the clients journeys.

Even with tight resources we have still managed to achieve over 377 trips in this last year of which 101 were for local shopping or post office and 276 were medical.

Venue(s)	No. of Trips
Luton & Dunstable Hospital	41
Harpenden Halls	4
St Albans Hospital	31
Mount Vernon Hospital	23
St Albans Health and Wellbeing Centre (Civic Centre)	22
Harpenden Surgery	12
Hemel Hempstead Hospital	12
Lister Hospital	10
Village surgery	10
Highfield Surgery (eye clinic)	9
Harpenden Memorial Hospital (Red House)	9
Spire Hospital Harpenden	6
Watford Hospital	6
The Elms Medical Practice	5
Other medical destinations	40

We must thank our wonderful drivers for their dedication throughout the year, none of this would be possible without them. We would also like to thank our other transport organisers: Val, Mary, and Anne for sharing the load and stepping up when we needed help.

## Companionship Secretary's Report

Clare Corcoran

Despite the restrictions the Covid -19 pandemic has imposed during the last year, the Companionship Network scheme continues. While visits have not been possible for most of this time, regular phone calls from our companions have taken place and I know our residents and companions are very much looking forward to the ending of all restrictions and to resuming visits if they haven't already.

We currently have four residents within the scheme. Four residents have left, we have received five new referrals and three new volunteers have joined. We have 10 volunteers.

Christmas hampers were delivered to all our residents in the Network which were gratefully received as well as a wellbeing pack which was delivered in the New Year.

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 organisation 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

Throughout the Lockdown we have had many requests for assistance from various sources, mainly through our dedicated WCG Community Services Helpline, which has enabled clients who need help, to reach us quickly. We have continued to build good relationships with many organisations, some of which have asked for our assistance. Our referrals over the last year have come from: St Albans Food Bank, health workers, Inspireall – The St Albans Family Centre, St Albans and Harpenden Friendship Scheme, Harpenden Hygiene Bank, Citizens' Advice, Wheathampstead Support for All, Beech Hyde School, St Helen's School, Katherine Warrington School, previous clients – returning for help when problems return, local residents, members of the WCG Committee, volunteers and self-referrals.

### Help provided

When assistance is needed, I contact and visit everyone who is referred to us and identify how WCG can help them. For every referral, I make recommendations and agree on an action plan with the WCG Trustees. The kind of assistance we provide varies from supplying Food Bank Vouchers to household appliances and larger projects. The following give examples of how we have helped residents and groups during the last 12 months.

- Financial assistance for second-hand furniture and white goods.
- Financial help to pay a telephone bill.
- Financial assistance towards moving costs for a resident with mobility problems, moving from a house to a flat.
- A special vacuum cleaner, recommended by a doctor, for a mother whose daughter has asthma, made worse by Covid-19.

- Blanket, sleeping bag and socks for a needy resident.
- A special pushchair for a toddler with autism. This pushchair is owned by the WCG and can be used by other local families, once this toddler has outgrown it.
- A 'phone charger for a needy resident.
- Rail tickets for travel to a London hospital for medical appointments.
- Tesco and Food Bank vouchers for families who cannot afford basic groceries.
- Payment of gas/electric bills for families in crisis.
- Gardening help for residents with health problems.
- Essential toiletries for a very needy resident.
- A second-hand desktop computer for a mature student.
- A visit to a lonely resident, who has now been referred to our Companionship Network and our Luncheon Club.
- Assistance with shopping.
- Supporting families during the Coronavirus crisis, when wages and Universal Credits were delayed.
- Delivering 'little bags of kindness' supplied by Herts. County Council for older, local residents.

### Donations

Also, various household items have been kindly donated by local residents and delivered to clients by our volunteers. My thanks go to David, Marion, Mike and Chloe, our Trustees, and all the Committee and Volunteers for all their support throughout the last year and, of course, to Wheathampstead residents, who always donate so generously, enabling these referrals to be carried out.

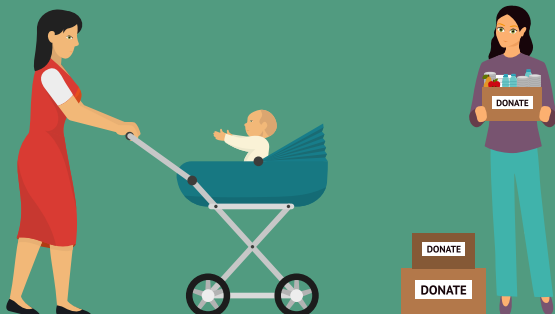
**“Thank you so much for your help today, I was getting myself rather anxious about my isolation situation, WCG helped me out immediately today... even in these uncertain times and being an hour's drive from any family, this is an amazing place to live. Extremely grateful.”**

**Wheathampstead Resident**



# Santa's Sleigh Report

Louise Canfield



## Marketing Report

Morwenna Ellis

With over 590 Facebook followers, social media is still a key platform for us to recruit, raise money and inform the village of ways WCG can help residents.

We've noticed in the last 12 months, an increase in residents direct other residents to us as a form of support. All these things point to an increased presence and awareness of WCG's contribution within the village.

We are however aware of the importance of leaflets and verbal communications to ensure we reach all those who don't engage with social media; our valued volunteers continue to assist us in getting this message out to people.



Santa's Sleigh 2020

**"Well done and thanks to everyone who is helping to make this happen, especially Santa himself!"**

Wheathampstead Parent

Our 2020 Santa's Sleigh outings were scaled back this year in order to observe social distancing. However, Santa still brought the Christmas magic to Wheathampstead, and we made three nights out (12th, 14th and 17th December).

The Santa's sleigh team went in convoy around the village, keeping contact whilst staying in our 'bubbles' was made possible using the walkie talkies purchased last year – a great investment!

Our Follow Santa Wheathampstead Facebook page continues to attract followers, currently 223, with many more seeing our posts through the WCG page, Wheathampstead Network and shares. This was an invaluable tool this year as we were able to engage with our audience whilst observing social distancing, leading up to, during and after the sleigh runs. With Santa's help we made a video setting out the differences in this year's sleigh runs and advising that donations could be made online. A total of £210.00 was raised. We all agreed this was a great result as this year the runs were purely to bring some joy to the village after such an extraordinarily challenging year.

Going forward, funds raised by the Santa's Sleigh outings will continue to support the local MacIntyre Home and the Thursday Club activities (under the WCG banner), the remaining funds will be retained by Wheathampstead Community Group and used specifically for supporting younger residents of the village for items such as school trips/uniforms/equipment and for donations in support of families.

We express our utmost thanks to; Jamie Burrows at Sandridgebury Farm for kindly storing the sleigh for another year, the PPL PRS for issuing us with a 100% discounted music licence, our fantastic volunteers, the residents of Wheathampstead for their support and kindness and of course... Santa!

**"Thank you. Two very happy children loved having a boogie with Santa!"**

Wheathampstead Parent

# Treasurer's Report

Mike Greensmith

## Financial Summary

### Wheathampstead Community Group

Financial Year:		2020/21	2019/20
		£	£
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Collections &amp; Donation</b>		
	Annual appeal	–	9,155
	Santa Sleigh Collections	210	2,417
	Collection box proceeds	3	178
	Donations from individuals	7,678	3,944
	Client Contributions	22	10
	Donations from Organisations	875	843
	<b>Grants - from:</b>		
	Wheathampstead Parish Council	–	670
	Other	600	4,340
	<b>Events - Proceeds from:</b>		
	Village Day Plant Stall	–	317
	John Bunyan Charity Day	–	2,510
	Carol Sing-along	–	580
	Other	–	–
	<b>Other Income</b>		
	Internet Café	41	25
	Gift Aid	5,418	2,690
	Investment Income	1,273	1,546
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£ 16,120</b>	<b>£ 29,226</b>

It goes without saying that 2020 and 2021 have been very unusual years. Nevertheless, WCG's financial position remains strong. As always, the generosity of Wheathampstead residents is the reason behind that positive situation.

### Fundraising for WCG in 2020/21 bore no comparison to the previous year and declined by 45% to a total of £16,120.

- Despite plans to run the annual appeal in some form, it had to be cancelled as the second Covid lockdown occurred
- Whilst we were still able to perform the Santa Sleigh runs, it was not possible to have the "bucket" collections. £210 was raised in online donations via the Santa Visits Wheathampstead Facebook page.
- Grants were received from Tesco Groundworks and West Herts Rural Support Networks. Thanks to these organisations for their support.
- Individual donations rose substantially as our supporters donated to WCG directly outside of the Annual Appeal. £7,678 was donated in total, to which around £1,800 Gift Aid can be added.
- Gift Aid receipts rose substantially to £5,418, reflecting amounts claimed again 2019/20 donations, but also due to Gift Aid now being collected directly on online donations rather than retrospectively.
- All WCG fundraising events such as the John Bunyan Charity Day were cancelled this year, with an obvious effect on income from that source.
- WCG's investments generated £1,273 in interest.



### Financial Year 1st May 2020 to 30th April 2021

Financial Year:		2020/21	2019/20
		£	£
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Direct Charitable Expenditure	10,014	8,912
	Fund raising costs	8	1,533
	Charity running costs	4,192	3,485
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 14,214</b>	<b>£ 13,931</b>
<b>Excess Income over expenditure</b>		<b>£ 1,905</b>	<b>£ 15,295</b>
<b>Gain on Investment Valuation</b>		3,639	(4,915)
<b>Total Gain in Year</b>		<b>£ 5,544</b>	<b>£ 10,380</b>
<b>As at:</b>		<b>30-Apr-21</b>	<b>30-Apr-20</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>Investments</b>	29,062	25,424
	<b>Cash in Hand and at Bank</b>	25,981	24,076
		<b>£ 55,044</b>	<b>£ 49,500</b>

### £10,014 was expended in Direct Charitable Expenditure in 2019/20.

Including:

- £6,974 spent in direct financial support of those in need. This includes shopping support and Christmas hampers via the Wheathampstead Support for All Initiative,
- £3,040 donations to local organisations, including the sponsorship of the Beech Hyde school Jigsaw PHSE scheme.

### At 30 April 2021, the total assets of WCG amounted to £55,044.

Beverley Turner of Lamburn and Turner Accountants has again acted as our independent Examiner, and has additionally provided regulatory advice, for which we pass on our heartfelt thanks. Please contact me on [treasurer@wheathampsteadwgc.org](mailto:treasurer@wheathampsteadwgc.org) if you would like to see WCG's full report and accounts.

## Sources of Funding 2020/21

Collections and Donations:	
Annual appeal	0.0%
Santa Sleigh collections	1.3%
Collection box proceeds	0.0%
Donations from individuals	47.6%
Client contributions	0.1%
Donations from organisations	5.4%
Grants from organisations	3.7%

Events - Proceeds from:	
Village Day plant stall	0.0%
John Bunyan Charity Day	0.0%
Carol Sing-along	0.0%

Other Income:	
Internet Café	0.3%
Gift Aid	33.6%
Investment income	7.9%



Wheathampstead  
**WCG**  
Community Group

**[www.wheathampsteadwcg.org](http://www.wheathampsteadwcg.org)**

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

**Chair:** David Johnston  
**Treasurer:** Mike Greensmith  
**Secretary:** Chloe Priest Griffiths