**Chairman’s Report GCRCG AGM**

**November 2020**

**Purpose:**

The Chair’s Annual Report reviews activities over the past year, to highlight major developments and to cast an eye forward to the coming year.

**Introduction:**

It has been a year like no other in any of our experiences. For those who may read this report in future, I trust the memories of COVID-19 will have faded but for us now, it remains very much at the forefront of our minds and indeed our lives.

The safety and health of our residents has remained paramount in your Management Group’s mind through the pandemic. During lockdown, and subsequently with social distancing, your Management Group has not met together since February but in the absence of any major activity being possible, this has not been an impediment.

It has been a blessing that no-one, to the best of our knowledge, in the village has actually passed away from this disease though many may well know of those who have.

COVID has brought our lives to a standstill this year in so many ways, and yet through it we have seen the human spirit rise in mutual friendship, collaboration, support and no little ingenuity.

But before we get to that, we must record the passing of some in our Community[[1]](#footnote-1):

*Hywel Hughes, Ddol Castell*

*Anne Murphy*

**Review:**

Our year started with much optimism with the inaugural Winter Festival 2019 in December.

The Christmas Tree “Lights-On Ceremony” was attended by well over 200 from our community. We are grateful to the Mayor of Conwy, Cllr Goronwy Edwards, for performing this. It was a relief to your Management Group that all the electrics worked fine and there were appreciative ooohs and aaahs when the lights came on.

Some 180 hog roast baps were served and the evening progressed with live music from Ivor & Pam.

2 weeks later, “Carols Round the Tree” saw 80 people including many children gathering, happily more than we’d expected. That we sang carols bi-lingually was warmly appreciated by all. It was particularly atmospheric for the children to lead us up to Seion Chapel singing “Silent Night” by candlelight where we then sang and heard seasonal readings. The offering raised £115 for Conwy Food Bank.

Both evenings were blessed with dry, cold and still weather.

Thank you to all those who helped make the Festival such a success. We had much positive feedback at the time, too much to put in this report save perhaps this:

*“For the smaller children one of the highlights was being able to wander about on the road without having to hold an adult’s hand”.*

It was clear from the overwhelming support and encouragement which we received that the community would welcome something similar taking place the following year.

And so to 2020..

Our last public meeting in February saw a lively debate about the public toilets on Llanerch and in the end it was decided that no further action would be taken.

The optimism that brought 2019 to an end faded as 2020 entered Spring. Lockdown changed so much including the cancellation of Rowen’s Car Boot Sales for the year.

And yet there were many good things to celebrate:

All the unseen acts of support which demonstrate the strength of community in Rowen.

We saw people’s creative side, not least from our younger residents, as rainbows popped up across the village saying a mighty big THANK YOU to our NHS and Key workers.

Thank you to Sandra and Chris who coordinated our food orders from local businesses and then hand delivered these around the village.

Your Secretary created a telephone support network, Rowen Village Responders, to provide information for those not on the Internet and assistance where it was not otherwise readily available. Thank you to all who helped on the team.

Your Chair got to grips with new technology and transferred the Pub Quiz to Zoom!

We also had a couple of interesting requests:

The first was for a restoration of Wallace The Dog’s gravestone. It is surely in need of some TLC but with it sited on private land it was not immediately obvious how to proceed and at the time the Management Group was fully committed personally in other directions. Can anyone help with this?

Secondly, we were approached about upgrading Pont Swan, the metal bridge over Afon Ro in the heart of the village. With the bridge not being ours to change, and being sited on public land, your Management Group felt that this matter did not fall within our remit.

**Looking Forward…**

As at the time of writing, it is not clear how the coming year will develop or what we will be able to achieve. With COVID rules changing regularly it makes planning difficult.

As I say, we have had requests from some in the village to start certain projects, and whilst most have not been feasible to start, knowing what you are interested in is always helpful. Please keep the suggestions coming!

In the meantime, there are three activities on the horizon that we do know about.

**Winter Festival 2020**

We hope to run a Winter Festival again, albeit somewhat smaller compared with last year. Certainly we will erect a tree and have lights on it. We are talking with Conwy Borough Council Safety Advisory Group so please be assured that whatever is finally put on will be in strict compliance with the latest COVID guidelines.

**Rowen Community Quiz**

The Rowen Community Quiz will run on a monthly basis over the winter. We use the Zoom platform and if anyone wants to join in but is uncertain how to get set up with Zoom, please do make yourself known to the Secretary.

**Car Boot Sales 2021**

Clearly, we have no way of knowing when Car Boot Sales will start again next year. Whatever form they may take, again be assured we will strictly abide by COVID guidelines.

**Fund Raising – Your Help is Needed!**

Car Boot Sales were the main means of raising funds in the past. This is not going to be possible for the foreseeable future. So, we need your inspiration and help in raising funds, however that may be done. Please do present your ideas to us, or press on regardless and then simply send us your cheque if you prefer.

Finally, it only leaves me, on behalf of the whole Management Group to wish you a very Happy Christmas, a peaceful New Year and a healthy and safe 2021.

I now encourage you to read the Treasurer’s Financial Report.

1. With sincere apologies for any family member we have missed [↑](#footnote-ref-1)