

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Although the core Action Group for Love Lydgate is relatively small and most are from the more mature section of society, they have continued to make a major impact on the visual environment of the village and continued to encourage a positive ethos.

Planting and the environment.

It was a real roller coaster of weather last year, from the bright days of May and June, through sodden August and then a winter with Arctic conditions but as ever in Lydgate we've come through it all.

- Spring and summer saw all hands-on deck after Oldham asked us to once again be involved in their bid for Britain in Bloom. Although supported by OMBC with donations of flowers and the watering of planters and baskets, the selection of blooms and colours and the hard work, not just in planting but cleaning up and improving the place generally, was down to the hard work of our volunteers. Extra plants were paid for by money raised at the Plant Sale in May. Once again there was a great turn out for this annual community event and some delicious home bakes, jams etc.
- As an extra this year, we requested hanging baskets for the Parish Hall. We have decided to keep these as they looked glorious and made such a difference to the attractiveness of the building. This has been made possible by the generosity of David Brierley who is funding a watering system. The church has also donated £50 towards the cost of the planting.
- Over the years the appearance of the village has improved but I have to say that the show of flowers this year was the best ever, largely thanks to Lesley's eye for colour and choice of blooms and her ability to layer plants, so we can enjoy continued flowering. Thanks to Lorna, Kath and others too for the autumn planting which has resulted in a fine show of spring bulbs.
- Last year saw the increased involvement of residents on Platting Rd, who planted lots of daffodils and other spring flowers in the verges. They also raised the issue of 2 cherry trees which had been replaced by rowans. I was able to broker a meeting between ourselves and Nik Anderson the OMBC arborculturalist. LL had agreed to pay for new cherry trees but in the end, these were funded by Oldham and the rowans were used to fill gaps on Oldham Road. This was a good outcome as both John Letcher and Brian Wilcox made a supreme effort in helping me clear the undergrowth and rubbish by the Lydgate sign at the bottom of Quick Rd. I also enlisted the support of TMBC who cleared the gulleys and pavements down there. Tameside also responded positively and promptly recently, to remove fly tipping dumped in the lay by. This largely forgotten gateway to our village was further lifted by colourful planting by some of the south Lydgate residents.
- Thanks to Mick McGuire for his painting of the Parish Hall fence and raised bed and to the Bolshaws for cleaning the well -- small but important tasks that we would soon notice if they weren't done.

Events and activities

The year has seen a lot of activities which have resulted in fund raising for our own organisation and others but perhaps even more importantly have brought people together both from Lydgate and from surrounding villages.

- In June, along with Charles from the White Hart and Saddleworth Round Table we organised the Great Get Together. In just one week, spurred on by the horror of the Manchester terrorist attack and helped by the glorious weather we put together an event which brought many people together and raised over £5,000 for the Manchester victims.
- In September we had a very successful concert with Saddleworth Male Voice choir and others' 'A September Song', which was primarily a concert for Eric -- the money raised has funded a lasting memorial, a bench on the back field.
- October saw our Lydgate Lunch with the usual attractions of Martyn Torr as compere, Lydgate Band creating the convivial atmosphere, fantastic table decorations by Dorothy and Lesley and a stimulating quiz by Philip Clarke. It also gave us the opportunity to present local Guide leader, Sue Lumley with the Above and Beyond Award.
- October also saw the introduction of our regular armchair exercises in the Parish Hall. They have been well supported and we hope to continue these as soon as we find a new facilitator.
- Following an appearance at a charity concert in autumn, the Lydgate Larks have seen a resurgence and have already have concert dates booked!
- The History project is still being progressed with the support of Michael Fox. The outcome is likely to be a booklet, but we have already created a presentation about the History of Lydgate Fold and a recording of Margaret and Fred Yates being interviewed about their memories.
- December 7th saw our Christmas Lights Switch On -- a real community effort on a bitterly cold night. We had support from the usual suspects as well as Saddleworth Rotary, volunteers from St Anne's PTA and the delightful school choir. This year the church allowed us to use the hall rent free, which was appreciated. The Guides ran a stall, Father Christmas arrived with the biggest elf you've ever seen, and the Parish Hall was filled to the rafters with a happy crowd of families.
- Looking to the future, Gordon and myself attended a well dressing course at Saddleworth Museum. It was fascinating, and we certainly feel it is something we can do next year. The museum team are planning to do something Saddleworth wide this coming September, but we feel that we couldn't be ready in time for that.
- One project which didn't grab the attention and interest was the development of the Neighbourhood Plan for our area. This would inform the Planning Dept and the GMSF of sites we feel are sacrosanct, any specific needs e.g. transport, parking, play area etc and if a small development was needed for the village, where it should be sited and how it would look. Apart from the Steering Committee, there was only one attendee at the presentation. For me this lack of interest and involvement is a cause for concern.

All our events are carefully costed. Often the income and outgoings are complex, but we are very fortunate to have Margaret Merckel, our Treasurer, overseeing and diligently recording every expenditure. Margaret is scrupulous in her book keeping and keep us on track when our ideas get a bit too fanciful. Thanks to her and to accountant Peter Harley for verifying our books.

Working with St Anne's church

We have continued to raise money for the Parish Hall, presenting the church with a further £1,248 for more windows to be fitted. In July we held a coffee morning to meet with Reverend Canon Sharon Jones, new Team Rector for Saddleworth to share ideas. Frank and I will continue to attend the church's 'Looking Forward' meetings so that we can have input into future planning. We did ask that £50,000 from the sale of the vicarage should be given towards the refurbishment of the Parish Hall and improving the graveyard but as yet that prayer hasn't been answered!

The lack of maintenance of the graveyard has been a continuing concern over recent years and is impacting on the gardens of neighbours closest to the church and on the village generally. The church said it has no funds available, so Love Lydgate discussed making a donation towards the area adjacent to the East wall, which borders Stockport Rd, on the proviso that the church would then take on the responsibility to keep on top of the maintenance. As we considered this, we were delighted to receive a very generous offer from a local resident to cover the costs of very nearly £1,000. We approached the church, involved Nik Anderson, OMBC Arborculturalist and the work got under way. Unfortunately, two trees which need to be removed had not been passed with the correct faculty by the diocese and even though we have an offer to pay the £200 for their removal from Charles Brierley, we are still waiting for Diocese to give the go ahead.

Health and Safety is an important consideration in all that we do. Once again, we have offered the opportunity for First Aid Training this year, paid for by Love Lydgate. The Accident Book is kept up to date and risk assessments always completed prior to any activity. Thanks must go to Claire from reception at the White Hart who monitors and maintains the Defibrillator. Love Lydgate supplied a sign for it displaying the post code and making it clear that the equipment can only be used when directed by the Ambulance Service.

Meetings and Communication

We have reduced the number of meetings of the Action Planning Group to one per quarter, although others are held to prepare for a particular event. I meet regularly with the Chairs from Grotton, Austerlands and Springhead to exchange ideas and for mutual support. I also attend meetings between the Community Associations and the Parish Council. We have had business cards printed and we have had a reprint of the cards designed by Richard Darlington, which we use to welcome new people and send commiserations and congratulations. The website is now fully operational and we also have a facebook page but we need someone to keep it updated.

Lack of secretarial support is felt keenly by me and has a detrimental affect on communication in particular. Although we agreed to issue only one newsletter per year, this years hasn't been done yet and neither have the email contact groups. This is especially important this year as according to our constitution membership is for 3 years only and we need to give people the opportunity to renew.

Last year's picture is largely positive but there are issues that still cause concern:-

- Dog fouling
- Lack of volunteers
- Planning for succession

- Parking
- Speeding

Nevertheless, the whole team should feel immensely proud of all their achievements. We work hard, have some fun, spread a bit of community warmth and care and in turn are rewarded by being part of a lovely village with a mostly generous and considerate group of residents. We are a 'can do' community!

We receive excellent support from OMBC, The District Partnership, GMP, Charles and his White Hart Team. A huge thank you to them and to all of you and well done everyone!

Addendum

I cannot complete my report without saying how much I appreciated being awarded the Above and Beyond Award this year. It was a complete surprise and although I feel embarrassed by it to some degree,

because everything we do is a team effort, everyone likes a 'thank you' and I am no exception.



Jennifer Greenwood Chair of Love Lydgate