



Chairs Report 2021-22

2021-2022 has been a year very similar to last where Pandemic restrictions have still stifled events and fundraising. The world is, returning to a semblance of normality with some hesitancy in place by many with COVID being still present in everyday life.

This has been the year where all the efforts of Kevin have come to fruition where we have closed the longstanding Chirnside Common Good Association moving it forward to a more modern and fit for purpose organisation. This will allow us to continue the hard work as outlined in our constitution as a valuable member of the community.

The paths we installed last year have been a huge success with people every day using these to do a loop of the village avoiding walking on the main roads with no pavements. We have had many people comment on how useful and helpful they are to them, a jubilee bench will be installed in June from money raised by a street in the village to give a resting spot at one of our brilliant views on the paths, good job well done.

We have managed a few litter picks that have been generally well attended some people of the village really wanting to keep their home patch clean and tidy. The school children have joined in with the most recent of these borrowing our litter pickers to help encourage each other to clean up and hopefully the education of looking after our area will increase as the litter decreases. We will continue to promote these and engage more people in keeping our village clean and well cared for.

The Village Enhancement Group has continued with its work in the village when able, planning on sprucing up the planters now the bulbs have passed. Deborah has secured some new planters from AJ Scott wood yard, for the village entrances which will be installed closer to the end of the growing season so we can find suitable sites for these.

As part of our ongoing activities, we continue to work closely with the School awarding:

- the Frances Edgar Award,
- the Eric Hunter Award and
- the 'Spirit of Chirnside' Award.

We weren't able to present these prizes in 2021 as with previous years because COVID still had the school closed to outsiders. The kids who won were presented with their well earned prizes by the teachers. We hope to return to the school presentations

this year and share the legacy and history of these prizes with the new kids coming up the school.

Thanks to the volunteer team once again giving us a ray of light with the erection of the Christmas lights around the village. The switch on of the lights should have been a larger event this year with a reduction in the COVID restrictions however the rain and wind decided to batter us and the few soaked through souls who came to watch the Gala Queen, and the Common Good, switch on the lights. Some set backs with storm Arwen felling our Christmas Tree not long after it was erected, it eventually managed to stand for the whole of Christmas, a bright beacon in the dark nights. Remedial work is being done on the lights this year as time and weather has taken its toll on the strings. Thank you to the volunteers who have agreed to help us with this important work to keep the lights shining next year.

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Fundraising will hopefully resume this year with the last year being low on the ground with opportunities to do this. There are a number of projects being discussed at the moment that we hope to take forward during the 2022-23 season.

Our largest project this year is work towards refurbishing the tennis court. Due to COVID lockdowns the price of the works has almost doubled since our 1st quotations 2 years ago, sourcing extra funding has been challenging. We have now sourced enough to complete Phase 1, the perimeter fencing and the basketball hoops with work starting as soon as possible. Funding from the Co-op, SBC and The National Lottery Communities Fund has all helped in making it a reality. More funding needs to be found for Phase 2 for the resurfacing of the area to make it more user friendly but with the new perimeter and tennis net soon in place it will be open to the public again to use and enjoy.

Unfortunately, we are having increasing issues with unsocial behaviour within the village in where vandalism, harassment, loitering and more fire raising has been an issue throughout the year. The fence on the new path was damaged by one very large fire of farm equipment and complaints about unsocial behaviour, towards people in their homes and against amenities like the school outdoor facilities, the tennis court, bus stops, benches and the swap and share shed have been raised. We have asked for assistance with this from SBC and the community policing but vigilance by all is required.

With this being the year of the Queens Platinum Jubilee we asked all the groups of the village to be a part of a picnic in the park on the 4th of June, this collaboration along with the help of the SBC Jubilee grant is a free community event with teas, coffees, juice, scones, bouncy castle, bunting, paper crowns, flags, picnics and as many people as possible in the park. Civic week are bringing their crowning of the gala queen to the event and we will be enjoying old-school races and a good old community get together. We have planned to replace the Jubilee plaque in Windram Park as the original from the silver jubilee was vandalised and plan to plant a number of oak trees in appropriate places to leave a lasting legacy for the Queens reign.

The youth consultation in 2021 was very positive, where we had a number of kids make suggestions of things they would like to have within the village to do. Some of these ideas were a pump track, youth club and skate park equipment. We plan to look in more depth to all of these to see if we can help facilitate some of these to fruition. This may take some time but is still on the agenda.

The SCIO will continue to be an integral part of the community and hope to continue bringing together the old and young, encouraging engagement and discussion all round and enhancing the village in as many ways as we can. The history group have talks set up at the school to give the children an insight into the village of yesteryear which has been missing the last 2 years so a bit of catch up with the year groups who have missed this. We will continue to maintain and encourage responsible use of the Common Good Areas of the village while keeping the environmental impact of everything we do at the top of our agenda.

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Thank you to the whole of the group for their support and volunteering over the year and thank you especially to Kevin for getting us to where we are with the SCIO, to Linda and Simon also for their support also it is very much appreciated.

Sara Doggett
Chair