CHIRNSIDE COMMON GOOD ASSOCIATION

Chairs Report 2023-24

This year has been a quiet one in relation to big projects but we are still visible and involved in many smaller community things.

Continuing to keep the village on the wider Borders community radar by entering and supporting the Scottish Borders Council Greener Gateway awards and finally managed to win the Gold in the Large Village Category, where efforts to increase the biodiversity in areas that were once grass monocultures amongst other work were recognised. Working with more and more groups within the village to achieve this, the Primary School, the Chirnside Horticultural Society, Chirnside Scottish Womens Institute, Community Council, Scottish Borders Council and the Allotment Group.

Litter and vandalism continue to be issues within our village and the wider borders, with benches and other property having been vandalised. Living on a rather windy hill doesn't help with the extra bin day litter but there are still hotspots where litter collects. We will continue to engage as many people as possible in keeping our village clean and well cared for with regular litter picks using our quarterly village leaflet to promote and inform the community of our campaigns. We enlisted the help of the Justice Service to help us repair a couple of the vandalised benches and they did a wonderful job. We have another couple of things within the village that we are going to ask for their help with.

Our subgroup - Village Enhancement Group continues to keep the planters in good looked after condition over the year, adding more bulbs to the larger ones on the roads into the village, bringing a very welcome burst of colour in the miserable weather we had. They continue to work with the other likeminded groups of the village to improve other areas.

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

- the Frances Edgar Award (P6 essay competition),
- the Eric Hunter Award (Sporting) and
- the 'Spirit of Chirnside' Award.

We have just read this years entries to the essay competition with stories looking forward 200 years to what the world might be like then. Very interesting and great imaginations to even start to imagine how we will all be living that far in the future. The Henry Gray Mile will be run in June to commemorate another large name within the village and will be awarded the Eric Hunter Award. Keeping the school close in our

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village plans we hope to engage and encourage the children while they are young to look after the village as they grow older. There is a new category within the Greener Gateway award this year for school groups and we will support the school in entering this category.

We have agreed to make a contribution to a new war memorial within the village to name and commemorate the fallen from the WWI and II, the current war memorial only has the names of some of the WWI fallen. With our standing in the community it was agreed that we should contribute to this worthy cause and use it for more teaching within the community about those who came before us.

Thanks to the volunteer team once again giving us a ray of light with the erection of the Christmas lights around the village. The tree again being donated from a garden in the village, the help of a forklift with basket making the job much more manageable. We repaired 3 strings of lights to improve the reliability of them and it worked, all strings worked this year with minimal bulb changes required. Looking forward to next year we may think about increasing the number of strings within the village.

The tennis court and basketball hoop are well used, and the general maintenance continues on the net and lining to keep it usable. We need to keep an eye on the litter and the weeds within the tennis court but will encourage any users of the court to take their rubbish home with them.

The idea of a shared storage facility for the community council and the common good is on hold for the time being due to a number of reasons mainly planning issues around a building of the size that is required to house everything. At this time the equipment will remain in peoples sheds around the village until a solution can be found.

The swap and share shed is still going strong in the Common Good Carpark at the top of Crosshill. This shed is still popular with all the people in the village and is open on a number of days to allow for the widest availability for the residents. Due to the number of donations we get some of these items are recycled once they have been in the shed for a while along with the collection of ink cartridges, this has been raising a small but significant amount of money for the common good ongoing maintenance programme. We are getting less vandalism here which is encouraging.

The quarterly leaflet is going strong and is a valuable tool in letting people know what is going on in the village and wider community. We have enough sponsors every quarter to cover costs and our wonderful team of volunteer deliverers do a brilliant job or posting them through every door. We get good feedback on its efficacy of information distribution especially to the people who are less able.

This coming year the SCIO hopes to continue being an integral part of the community bringing together the old and young, encouraging engagement and discussion all round and enhancing the village in as many ways as we can.
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.
Thank you to the whole of the group for their support and volunteering over the year and to Kevin and Linda for their support also it is very much appreciated.

Sara Doggett
Chair