CHIRNSIDE COMMON GOOD ASSOCIATION

Chairs Report 2024-25

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 attending and putting our part of the borders on the map, we have planted a large area of wildflowers in the Quarry area of the village and these are starting to come through and fill the grass area with some much needed biodiversity, we are hoping to keep this area going each year. With the dry start to the year it has not been easy, some lovely villagers helping us to water and start the seeds off will hopefully pay dividends in the long run. Working with the local farmer as well to get some end riggs of the fields closer to the village also sown with wildflowers will brighten it up from all sides.

Litter and vandalism continue to be issues within our village and the wider borders, with benches and other property having been vandalised. We have been grateful for the Justice service in their help mending some of the broken benches. 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 have also been in touch with Biffa bins about their messy and very late in the day bin collections from the local shops but we still wait an answer.

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.
Taking over a very large stone planter at the villages east entrance has been a very large job, removing a lot of dead plants and bushes and replacing the soil ready to plant a large number of flowering and all year around colour plants and interest into what was a rather dull council planted area. We hope to work with the village on this and will be looking for volunteers, helpers and plants to help make this a focal point to the village once it has had a chance to establish. We have chosen plants that should withstand the temperatures and winds in the area to give us an all year round biodiverse and alive planter.

OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator www.oscr.org.uk Registered SCIO SC051238

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 about the students time in the woods during their lessons. Well written and good grammar, spelling and neat handwriting even in this day and age of the computer. Keeping the school close in our 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.

Our contribution to the new war memorial within the village to name and commemorate the fallen from the WWI and II, is well under way and we managed to secure another sum of money from the National Lottery to allow this project to come to fruition with the added extra of a new path to the old war memorial as well. This will allow better access for all. Members of the common good have been integral in the research and personalisation of the memorial, finding out more than just the names and DOB of each individual. We have been part of the village consultations and publicization of the memorial and hope to include the extra information on a board that will be sited near the memorials to make it a bit more personal. We have managed to get some kids from the school involved in the project and will be inviting them and the rest of the village to the unveiling in the near future.

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 had to replace the actual lights on the tree this year as last years bad weather took its toll on the lights that had been going for 3 years.

The history group remains under our wing but very much runs itself very successfully, managing to get monthly talks and a day out trip once a year as well as covering all of its costs by membership and selling the very popular calendar.

The tennis court and basketball hoop are well used, and the general maintenance continues on the net and lining to keep it usable. We secured some funding from Blackhill Wind Farm Fund, to replace the basketball net, buy more paint for the relining and to buy a replacement tennis net as well. 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 council have advised us that they cannot site a bin closer to the area so we will have to continue to rely on people taking rubbish home and on regular village litter picking.

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 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, it will be getting a lick of paint very soon courtesy of the BCCF Environmental Legacy Fund.

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 been very lucky to get funding to cover the printing costs for the leaflet over the next 2 years and hopefully our wonderful team of volunteer deliverers will continue to 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.
We plan to replace our banners which go with us to any events we attend and will be updating these with more current affairs of the group, the costs for this have also been covered by the Blackhill Wind Farm Fund which we are very grateful for all of their support.

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