CHIRNSIDE COMMON GOOD ASSOCIATION

Chairs Report 2025-26

Starting the year with the memorial plinth for all the fallen who had resided in and around Chirnside over the many wars and conflicts has been an important project over the last 12 months. We along with the community managed to secure the final funding required to make this fitting memorial happen.
Helped along by Noel and other community members we had a successfully attended a commemorative march from the centre of Chirnside to the Kirk for the unveiling of the plinth memorial with many veterans, dignitaries and school and community members in attendance.
This memorial stands in view of the original WW1 memorial and complements the area making sure all are remembered for their sacrifice.
To complete this project fully we plan to install steps and a handrail to make accessibility to the original war memorial and plans are underway to get this addition finalised and in place. Hopefully enlisting the help of the local Justice Department team to do some of the work.

Thanks to Mark who has started well in his new job as treasurer, spending time getting things changed over from Kevin. Kevin is still in the background for assistance if needed but all seems to be carrying on relatively seamlessly once the bureaucracy bits were out of the way.

We are continuing to keep the village on the wider Borders community radar by entering and supporting the Scottish Borders Council Greener Gateway awards format has changed this year focusing more on the Biodiversity and School projects. Continuing our work within the village to achieve more overall biodiversity throughout the village with the help of the Primary School, the Chirnside Horticultural Society, Chirnside Scottish Womens Institute, Community Council, Scottish Borders Council and the Allotment Group.

For our efforts we won the Large Village Silver award in the Greener Gateway competition against tough competition from Villages that have many more people and infrastructure than Chirnside. We always hope to do better every year so fingers crossed.

Litter and vandalism continue to be issues within our village and the wider borders, with the main bus stop in the village becoming increasingly frequented by youths.
Hopefully working with the community council we can discourage this behaviour. 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.

Our subgroup - Village Enhancement Group continues to keep the planters in good looked after condition over the year, adding more bulbs and plants to the larger ones on the roads into the village, bringing a very welcome burst of colour in the miserable weather we had.

The overhaul of the large planter at the east end has gone better than any of us could have thought. After the slow start trying to dig the old conifers and other dead plants out ended with a local with a digger taking pity on us. To about 10 residents turning up to help plant the new plants that had been donated from various places. Bulbs were planted at the right time and now this year everything is still alive and growing well. The display of bulbs was amazing, the mulch has been added to preserve the moisture and keep the weeds in abeyance. Thank you to everyones help with this and hopefully the other large bed at the east end will be on the cards for its overhaul in the coming years.

They have continued the wildflower areas in the Quarry, the 3rd year of this project to reduce grass cutting and increase biodiversity we have increased the area that is covered with the initiative this year with the help of SCB and their machinery to turn over the ground. Seeds have been sown to create more of a meadow wildflower area with yellow rattle to slow down the growth of the current thick agricultural grass. This is a longterm project that we hope makes the area more useful to wildlife as it has limited use for the humans.

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 will be reading the stories from the primary 6 group over the next couple of weeks to award their efforts for good story telling, grammar, spelling and imagination. 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 village plans we hope to engage and encourage the children while they are young to look after the village as they grow older.

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 being donated from Mordington estate, with the help of a forklift with basket making erection of the tree and lights a bit easier. We had a couple of issues with youths playing too close to the tree and falling into it breaking the lights, them and their parents quickly telling us and helped towards replacing the lights. The tree was light less for a week while we procured new strings but now hopefully people will be a little more careful around the tree at Christmas.

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 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. Painting the shed with the help of the BAVS fund has helped keep the shed in good condition for the foreseeable future. General maintenance on the shelving will need to be done this year.

With the extra funding from The Blackhill Wind Farm fund we have secured the quarterly leaflets future for the next couple of years. We still have plenty of content and is a valuable tool in letting people know what is going on in the village and wider community. 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.

Sara Doggett
Chair