



**“Improving Our Community Together”**

## **WAG AGM June 2020 (Postponed until Further Notice) Chair’s Report for the year 2019/20**

### **Introduction**

The WAG Committee has continued to undertake work on behalf of the Community with a limited number of Committee members available. However, all the Committee members and WAG volunteers are to be congratulated on what has been achieved under these circumstances.

We would welcome local residents who are supportive and interested in “Improving Our Community Together” to consider standing for election as a WAG Committee Member.

2 Public Meetings have been held during the year in September and December. Due to the Covid-19 situation the March was cancelled, and the scheduled June meeting including the AGM has been postponed until further notice. WAG is making this report and the Treasurer’s Annual Report available to residents in the meantime.

In addition to the Public Meetings the Committee members met between the dates of the Public Meetings to discuss and progress issues and deal with concerns raised individually by residents,

During the last 12 months WAG has ceased to routinely attend St Albans Parish Council meetings. Previously some of the St Albans Parish Councillors were also WAG Committee members, but those Councillors have now resigned from the Parish Council.

WAG has endeavoured to keep residents informed via email and Facebook, and more recently on the recently launched new website. Through these channels, WAG has relayed information provided by Nottinghamshire County Council and Gedling Borough Council with regard to services and support available during the Covid-19 lockdown.

WAG and Gedling Borough Council undertook one community litter pick in the past year.

### **Update for 2019/20 and Plans for 2020/21 (and beyond)**

#### **St Albans Parish Council**

Since the St Albans Parish Council was established in May 2018, local representation on the Council has dwindled until currently, of the 9 Councillor positions, only 2 Councillors live in the Parish. The remaining Councillors live within 3 miles of the Parish boundary.

Elections were not held for the current cohort of Councillors due to there being insufficient nominations. Due to recent resignations, the Council has 2 vacancies and the election for these positions will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

If you are interested in being nominated to stand in the elections and WAG can help you with the nomination form, please get in touch.

#### **Meeting between WAG Committee Members and 4 St Albans Parish Councillors**

On 16<sup>th</sup> March, at the request of certain members of the Parish Council, a meeting was held at Bestwood Lodge Hotel. The Parish Clerk sent the invitation to meet stating; “The Council would like to discuss grant applications by WAG to the Council and cooperative working.”

However, previously the Clerk had issued the invitation via the Chair of WAG suggesting: "Maybe, if the meeting took place on "neutral ground" such a meeting could be more successful at alleviating the obvious tensions between WAG and the Parish Council and aid mutual understanding and cooperation."

WAG asked what the 'obvious tensions' were, but never received a reply to this question.

Not surprisingly the meeting did not achieve anything positive as, basically, the Parish Council want WAG to work on behalf of the whole Parish. Surely this is the role of the Parish Council.

It was confirmed that for WAG to be considered for future grants from the Parish Council WAG would need to provide events/activities for the whole of the Parish and place advertisements throughout the Parish. This is despite their own Grants Policy stating that grants are for the benefit of some or all of those living in the Parish.

### **Gedling Lotto - Good Cause**

WAG successfully applied and was accepted as a good cause for the Gedling Lotto. For every £1 ticket purchased naming WAG as the good cause, WAG will receive 50p. You will also be in with a chance to win a prize. The top prize every week is £25,000.

The first draw takes place on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

You can sign up now to take part. Click here: <http://tiny.cc/WAG-Lotto-Page>

### **Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire's Summer Reception**

WAG accepted the invitation from Sir John Peace for two members of the WAG Committee to attend his Summer Reception held in June. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about developments in other areas, funding opportunities and generally network with other volunteers.

### **Greenwood Community Forest**

Following the tree and shrub planting at Warren Primary Academy in March 2019, WAG again worked with Nottinghamshire County Council's Greenwood Community Forest team in September 2019. This was a history teaching project. WAG Committee members helped the students with an interactive quiz and learn how to build 'wattle and daub' huts.

### **Daffodil bulb planting**

Gedling Borough Council provided 1,000 daffodil bulbs to be planted on Muirfield Road Recreation Ground. These were planted in October 2019 by WAG Committee Members, resident volunteers, two young volunteers, a member of staff from the Greenwood Community Forest Team and Gedling Borough Council staff.

### **Fireworks display 2019 and plans for 2020**

WAG arranged the annual fireworks display on the Muirfield Road Recreation Ground and commissioned Galaxy Fireworks to provide the display. There were also food vendors available. The event was very well attended and a huge success.

WAG worked closely with GBC and the Police to ensure that the event was not only enjoyable but safe for all who attended. We would particularly like to thank Mel Cryer and his Team for their support and advice and PC Jane Walters for her time and expert advice given.

Our thanks are also recorded to all WAG Committee Members and residents who prepared the area for the display, worked as stewards during the event and cleared and litter picked the area afterwards. The contributions of all of those mentioned ensured that a safe and enjoyable event was provided.

WAG raised the money for the event and received a grant of £2,400 from St Albans Parish Council towards the total costs of the event.

WAG has booked Galaxy Fireworks to provide a display on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and Gedling Borough Council has agreed the licence for the event to take place.

WAG cannot apply to St Albans Parish Council this year for a grant as they have changed their criteria to state groups need to cover the whole of the Parish Council area to be eligible. We are currently looking for other sources of funding.

### **Christmas Activities 2019 and Plans for Christmas 2020**

WAG again raised funds to provide a Christmas Tree with lights on the turning point at the junction of Bewcastle Road and Finsbury Road and for 15 lamppost lights along Bewcastle and Muirfield Roads.

We held a switching on event outside Oakwood Academy with the choirs from Warren Primary and Oakwood Academies providing musical entertainment. We also received a visit from Santa who handed gifts to the choirs and other children in attendance. We hired Musical Mascots who provided characters from Frozen and Toy Story to entertain those present and provide photo opportunities. The company also provided popcorn and candy floss for sale.

Prior to the light switch-on event, Afternoon Tea was provided to a group of senior residents living in the WAG area. This was held at Warren Primary Academy and the catering staff provided a superb buffet. Each person attending was provided with a gift bag of Christmas goodies and there was also a free raffle of food items provided by the parents whose children attend the school.

WAG applied to St Albans Parish Council for a grant of £1,500 towards the costs of these activities but this was turned down on the basis that WAG does not work across the whole of the Parish area, which as previously stated is at odds with their own Grants Policy.

WAG did receive grants from County and District Councillors towards these events and we are extremely grateful to them.

The Christmas activities were a great example of partnership working involving both of our local schools, Gedling Borough Council, the Via and local residents. We thank each and everyone of you for your support and contribution which made this possible.

The date for the 2020 Christmas Light Switch-on event has been agreed for Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December and will follow a similar format to previous years. Warren Primary Academy has agreed to host the Afternoon Tea again before the light switch-on.

WAG is currently exploring funding opportunities to cover the costs.

### **Development of Muirfield Road Recreation Ground**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final stage of the development, namely the refurbishment and extension of the playground, was completed and officially handed over to Gedling Borough Council in November 2019.

WAG first considered this project in late 2015 and successfully applied for Planning Permission in March 2016.

Between March 2016 and November 2019, WAG undertook a lot of work and submitted numerous grant applications.

As a result of this project **£165,490** has been invested in the WAG area.

### **WAG Website**

A local resident and a member of their family have developed a new website for WAG which has been launched recently. They have done this without charge and WAG is extremely grateful to them for the work they have done and to the resident agreeing to manage the website into the future.

### **Longer term aim**

For the last 5 years WAG has spoken about the need for a Community Hub in the area, and this continues to be our aspiration. We continue to explore this possibility and potential funding opportunities.