

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE GRANGE HALL, THE GRANGE, COVENTRY ROAD, SOUTHAM ON THURSDAY, 21st MAY 2015 at 6:45pm

Present: Councillors: M Willoughby (Chair), J Ward, B Thomas, T Bromwich & M Cunningham

Members of the public present were:

Mr D Hudson, Mr P Monday Snr, Mr P MondayJnr, Mrs T Saddler, Mr B Cadogan, Mr D Thomas, Mrs S Goatley, Mrs P Brailsford, Mr Charles Barlow, P C J Cramp, Mr Brian Howard, Mrs Pam McConnell,
Ms Rachel Sayers, Mrs Daphne Smith, Mrs Jane Soni, Mrs Sally Forgan, Mrs Jane Jones, Mr Adrian Denham

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Cllr Gaffney Southam Town Council, M Webster Southam Dancing Club, J Steele Craven Lane Hall, Ms E Longworth Southam Primary School, J Price St Mary's Catholic School, P Adams St James Church, Michael Hill Southam Twinning Association, W Pease Rotary Club of Southam, D Moreton 2028(Southam) Squadron ATC , E M Gardener Southam Drop In, S Meacham Friendship Group, S Garlick Royal British Legion, J Graham Southam Derby & Joan Club, M Hardy Inner Wheel Club of Southam, J Gwillam Grange Hall Management Committee, A Cragg Melody Makers, Southam Baha'is, Rev G Roberts Fosse Food Bank.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 9th May 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record of the proceedings.

3. MATTERS ARISING

None

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Report of the Town Mayor for the year 2014/2015 was presented to the meeting and is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

5. REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS Appendix B

The meeting received written reports from the following:

St Mary's Catholic School
St James C of E Primary School
St James Parish Church
Southam Congregational Church
Southam Twinning Association
Rotary Club of Southam Town Council
2028(Southam) Squadron ATC

Friendship Group
Southam Darby & Joan Club
Grange Hall Management Committee
Southam Christmas Lights
Melody Makers
Fosse Food Bank
Southam WI
Southam & District Lions
SCIFF
Southam First

Verbal Reports

Mr David Thomas	Southam & District Lions
Mr Bernard Cadogan	Southam Heritage Collection
Mr Charles Barlow	VASA
Mrs S Goatly	Southam WI
P C J Cramp	Warwickshire Police
Brian Howard	Southam First
Mrs Pam McConnell	Southam Civic Ideas Forum
Mrs Tessa Sadler	Southam in Bloom
Rachel Sayers	Southam Youth Club

The Town Mayor thanked all those attending and submitting reports to the meeting. Those reports submitted in writing are attached to these minutes as Appendix B

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS RAISED BY ELECTORS**
There being no other business the meeting closed at ???

Appendix A

Mayors Report 2014/2015

Mark Willoughby - Retiring Mayor 2015

Mayors Report 2014/2015

During the past 12 months I have had the privilege to be your Mayor. Although at times it has been difficult to juggle both work and mayoral commitments I have enjoyed the experience and believe that I am a better person because of it. My wife Rachel and myself have had the pleasure of the company of some very inspiring individuals who too continue to work at the forefront and behind the scenes to make the town of Southam a great place to live. This is also true of people whom we have met from neighbouring towns and parishes during my mayoral duties.

I have enjoyed many events this year as Mayor and a few stand out in my mind. The annual 'side by side' production at the Royal Spa Centre and the WW1 100th anniversary service in Warwick were both truly inspiring.

The annual switch on of Southam Christmas lights turned out to be another success. A large crowd turned out in what was good weather. This could have been so different if I had carried out the request by Bob Brolly to sing 'Jingle Bells' in front of everyone. Maybe the Mayor next year can start a new tradition.

As the construction of Tithe Lodge the redevelopment of the old Victor Hodge's site is nearly complete. With this the relocation of the new library will bring a much required community service back to the centre of the town. The redevelopment of Market Hill is due to start in the coming weeks and I am sure that the changes will be a great improvement to this area of the town.

My chosen charities this year were Marie Curie Cancer Care and the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance. My family has first hand experience of the care which Marie Curie can provide and the air ambulance is regularly above the skies of Southam. It is reassuring to know that these services are available should they be needed. With that in mind it is with pleasure that I announce that £2187 will be shared between both charities enabling them to support the people within the Southam area.

During my time as Southam Town Councillor I have been proud to serve the town next to some very dedicated individuals. Many of them have since moved on to new challenges in their lives; some have simply retired from the council having served for many years and others continue to serve. To all you, I thank you for your time, guidance and dedication. I wish you all well for the future. I would also like to thank my wife, family and friends who have supported me during my time as Mayor.

Finally and not least I would like to say thank you to Debbie, Denise and Carol for their support during my time as Councillor and Mayor. At times your tireless work goes unnoticed but without you the Town Council would simply not function. Thank you.

That is my report for 2014/2015

Mark Willoughby - Retiring Mayor

Appendix B

VASA report to Southam Annual Town Meeting, 21 May 2015

Thank you for inviting me to this Annual Parish Meeting. It is a privilege to be able to give you VASA's report for our last year's activities.

The highlights of our activities are:

- We have arranged approximately 2,700 volunteer transport journeys from our Southam office.
- We have continued our arrangement with the Town Council to offer free volunteer transport to Southam residents. This works very smoothly.
- We have started to transport patients on behalf of West Midlands Ambulance Service, taking people to dialysis appointments. Previously many of the journeys were contracted to private taxi companies, at large expense.
- We have arranged 25 wheelchair loans from our Southam office.
- We have placed 45 individuals from the Southam area into suitable voluntary work.
- Across the District we have assisted approximately 200 voluntary groups with a range of issues. Issues including funding, governance and safeguarding. We have provided intensive support to a number of groups in Southam itself.

To undertake our work we are grateful to the funding from Southam Town Council and also funding from Warwickshire County Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council. We are also grateful for the many donations we receive from individuals and groups.

Of course we cannot deliver our work without the dedicated and loyal work of our volunteers, both office volunteers and volunteer drivers. I extend my thanks to them.

We are also grateful to the Town Clerk and her team for the support they've given in respect of our office at The Grange. You may know that the building is now largely unoccupied except for our volunteers. This has presented us with a number of challenges over the past year and the Town Clerk and her team have provided and continue to provide us with invaluable support.

This leads us onto the future of our work in Southam:

- With changes to the occupation of The Grange a number of access and safety issues mean we are now looking for alternative accommodation. It looks likely that we will move in the very near future. Possible alternative accommodation has been identified and this accommodation is very close by.

- We are expecting some significant changes to our funding over the next year, which may lead to some of our functions transferring to other organisations. However, the Volunteer Transport Service and Wheelchair Loan Service will remain with VASA and it is these two functions that I think the town and Town Council value most.
- We are excited at the prospect of being part of the “Tythe Lodge” development, once this is completed. We believe that this will enable us to better promote our services in the town and have a greatly enhanced profile in the area.

Finally, and somewhat opportunistically, a plea. In common with all areas of the District we urgently need more Volunteer Drivers. It isn't that we've suddenly lost a lot of drivers, it's more that we need to replace the natural turnover of drivers and also that journeys are becoming more complicated. The times of the day, weekend journeys, the length of journeys and drivers increasingly being tied up for longer all mean that we need more drivers. Please spread the word and encourage people to come forward for this valuable and most satisfying of voluntary roles.
Thank you.

Charles Barlow
Lead Officer
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Southam WI Annual report 2015

The Women's Institute movement in Britain started in 1915 – so this year is very special for its 212,000 members who are celebrating its 100th birthday.

The purpose of the WI back in 1915 – as the First World War secured its grip - was to revitalise rural communities and encourage women to become more involved in producing food. Since then the organisation's aims have broadened and the WI is now the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK.

Southam WI currently has 38 members who meet on the first Tuesday of each month from 7.30pm to 10.00pm at St Mary's Primary School. Our programme of events this year has truly reflected the aims of the first WI: “to provide women with educational opportunities and the chance to build new skills, to take part in a wide variety of activities and to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities”.

We have welcomed a wide variety of speakers who have made our monthly meetings enjoyable and informative. Lt Col Gerald Lesinski taught us that you can tell which regiment a soldier belongs to by counting the buttons on his or her uniform. We learned about the misery of leprosy sufferers in Nepal from Heather Alford. Val Brodie told us about the Voluntary Defence Association who ran a hospital in the Grange Hall during the First World War, and from Georgie Hale we heard (and saw) what it was like to be shipwrecked in Antarctica. Some myths about hedgehogs were



dispelled by an enthusiastic ‘hog man’ from Warwickshire Nature Conservation Trust. His photos of some baby hoglets raised many ‘aahs’ from our members.

We were entertained by Ginny Davis, who gave us a sample of her performance at the Edinburgh fringe, and in December our own members showed their talent by entertaining their WI friends to an evening of stories, poetry, monologues and music. As always, we have enjoyed each other’s cooking as we share sandwiches, savouries and home-made cakes at our monthly meetings, and we have also been out for afternoon tea in Wellesbourne and Woodstock and enjoyed a delicious and ample Christmas meal at the Great Western at Deppers Bridge.

We have visited several places of historic interest including Blenheim Palace, West Wycombe house and historic village, and Chedham’s Yard in Wellesbourne. Some of our members have visited the Poppy Factory, Kew Gardens and the Walsall Leather Museum. As they are invited to report back to our members, those of us not fortunate enough to be able to go can also learn something new and interesting.

We have continued to raise funds for a number of important causes which have included Operation Christmas Child, Heathcote Hospital; the Leprosy Society and Lifeboats – to name but a few. We have contributed to Southam Christmas Lights and Southam In Bloom, presented a cup at the Southam Produce Show, sponsored a tree at the Christmas Tree festival, joined in with quiz nights – and we even have a darts team!

The WI resolution in this centenary year is “Assessment of need in long term care”. We are calling on HM government to ensure that all those who need care – irrespective of the reason – will be provided with their choice of that care.

Southam WI is adopting an innovative ‘21st century’ approach to celebrate the WI centenary. We plan to live-stream the annual conference from the Royal Albert Hall over the Internet on June 4th and have invited members from other WIs to join us. We are especially delighted that three HRH’s will be present: the Queen, Princess Anne and the Countess of Wessex (I mean at the conference – not at our own event!). We are also planning a special lunch in August with strawberries and pink champagne, and some of our members will attend the centennial fair in Harrogate.

The committee work very hard to provide a supportive, informative and enjoyable environment for our members and I would like to pay tribute to their efforts this year and to thank them for the time they give to the WI and its associated activities.

Jane Jones, Secretary, Southam WI

Graham Adams Centre

This has been a year of ups and downs. So, first, the downside

In the summer a decision was taken to re-felt part of the roof and a company was engaged to carry out the work. Once they began they discovered that some roof boards needed replacing and the job was bigger than anticipated. While the work was underway, rainwater got into the building, flooding a room used by the day nursery. Fortunately, there was not too much disturbance to

the day nursery's running and remedial work has now been completed. Insurers are currently discussing settlement of claims made by various parties.

This time last year we were preparing tender documents for the governance of Southam Children's Centre. Appreciation is due to all those involved in preparing tender documents – it's not a fun job! Sadly, after a long wait we were told that our tender had not been successful and that the tender was awarded to The Parenting Project, based in Stratford, who, with very little warning decided to move the Children's Centre to Aldine Barn. We wish Manjit and her staff well & thank them for their work at the Graham Adams Centre. However, the GAC has been left to manage a difficult position in which our income has been considerably reduced at very very short notice while we have the same outgoings for utilities, maintenance and rent.

The good news is that there are organisations who wish to move into the building, there are ideas for development and there are organisations offering guidance and support. There are people with goodwill, skills and ideas, including our two new directors Neil and Sally. But we do need time in which to re-organise and build funds to cover our outgoings.

We are pleased that regular groups have continued to use the Centre, we are clearly providing a service which is valued by the community. Thursday's Parent and Toddler group is a great meeting place for young families and from June a playgroup will be in the centre to provide a new service.

The distribution centre for the Fosse Foodbank is open every Monday with the Café offering a snack. This is thanks to Carol Pratt's persistence, Jackie Grey's preparedness to act as local organizer and the generosity of local people. We are very grateful for support from the Congregational Church and from Southam United Charities.

The Youth Club membership has fluctuated, but thanks to the dedication of some of our directors and support from Dave Jones and assistance from Rachel Sayers, it has continued to operate on a fortnightly basis while we try to recruit a new youth leader. A very successful project in the early part of the year combined digital media and cooking skills and led to the production of a video featuring older members of our community recalling childhood meals and favourite foods. The video had its premier at the Growing Southam Day. We are grateful for support for Youth Club activities from Southam Town Council, Southam Lions and County Councillor John Appleton.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Thursday 21st May 2015

REPORT FROM GRANGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE John Gwillam – Chairman

The Grange Hall continues to be well used on a regular weekly basis throughout the year, with bookings into 2017! It is with sadness that we are

losing the Grange Preschool (a lucrative hiring) after many many years here and we shall miss them. However, the good news is that we welcome three new regular bookings – Powerhoop, Fitsteps and Messy Monster Toddler Group. The past year again saw fewer parties and presentation events, but this seemed to be a sign of the times. The good news is that they are increasing, and the diary is filling up. The Bar continues to provide additional much needed income for the Hall, and we try to keep prices as competitive as possible. We have a small but committed team of casual bar staff but could do with one or two more on our books.

Our concert programme continues, albeit much reduced. The Abba Tribute Evening and the Bob Brolly Christmas Concert proved as popular as the first time; they are both booked again for this year by popular demand, and we are hoping that they will again be successful. The Beatles Tribute was enjoyable, although did not attract a full house. Our lack of spare funds means that it is difficult to take a gamble and we have to be fairly certain that something will work. We are mindful that not everyone appreciates music, but It is becoming increasingly difficult to know what the people of Southam want (our planned Cheese & Wine evening last year had to be cancelled through lack of interest)!

Our accounts are with the Accountants, and we hope that the past year will show us just breaking even. Savings are almost impossible in a high maintenance building. Southam Town Council continue to be very supportive, and we are extremely grateful to them for the assistance they give. We also appreciate the Town Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council continuing their capital investment in the hall. We were very fortunate to have been successful in obtaining a grant from Stratford-on-Avon District Council's New Homes Bonus Fund, which enabled us to purchase 110 new chairs. Southam Town Council was also successful in obtaining a grant from this Fund on our behalf which enabled us to purchase new curtains for the hall and stage. To complete our much needed facelift, both Councils contributed 50-50 on the hall's redecoration and refurbishment of the chair store. It has made a tremendous difference and we have received many favourable comments.

The committee continues to work hard, but it needs some new members who have a little time to spare and, more importantly, have new ideas to share.

As always, I should like to thank Mrs Louise Neal (our Caretaker), Mrs Carole Gwillam (our Administrator) and the Management Committee members for their on-going support.

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Southam & District Lions Club



Registered Charity No. 1143392



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David Thomas
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Secretary:

Tony Lorimer
6 Rainsbrook Close

Southam
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15 Mayfield

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SOUTHAM AND DISTRICT LIONS CLUB REPORT 2014-15

Once again it has been a busy year for Southam Lions.

Last September, the **Southam Triathlon** was the first event to be organized in the new Lions year.

The event had previously been run by The Round Table but due to its demise the Lions had been approached to take over the “running” of the event (with help from the previous organizers.)

A grant of £500 was received from Stratford County Council and equipment loaned by Rugby Triathlon Club, for which we are truly grateful.

The competition was held over 2 days. The first day being a children’s race in which 50 children took part. (It was good to see so many enthusiastic children giving their all when we frequently hear so many negative stories of the youth today.)

The second day was the adult’s competition which had 130 entrants.

Both events were well received and money raised from the Triathlon was donated to Zoe’s Place.

Entry is now open for this year’s Triathlon which is being supported by a grant for £1000 from Southam Town Council.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances the **Ken Graham Senior Citizens Party** normally held in September had to be cancelled. It will however be back this year.

The **Hog Roast** was once again held at the Mop Fair and despite the atrocious weather the pig was served on time and the first carving was carried out by the Mayor. We would like to thank Southam First for the loan of their gazebos which made this annual event possible in such adverse conditions.

The annual **Lions Poetry Competition** was again held this year and supported by a Southam Town Council grant of £1000. Entries were again of an extremely high standard and the judges were given a difficult task of determining the winners. Entries were received from 200 children and 90 adults.

Organization of this year's competition is about to start with a grant already awarded by Southam Town Council of £100

The Lions were again involved with the Southam **Christmas Lights Switch On**.

Escorting Father Christmas to his grotto and helping with the marshalling of the children. This was followed by 3 intense weeks of fund raising with the **Father Christmas Float** in and around Southam. Once again the generosity of the people in Southam and surrounding villagers raised a staggering £5000 which was split equally between the two children's charities: Sense and The Shakespeare Hospice.

Other events organized during the year were:

The **Southam Grand National Race Night** (held at the Graham Adams centre raising £500 for Zoë's Place.)

The **May Day Fete** held at the Bowling Green raising money for the Air Ambulance.

We will also be helping again at this year's **Southam Carnival**.

Running throughout the year has been the monthly **Furniture Sale** which not only raises money for local charities but we also donate items to people in need.

Finally one group of people that I would like thank are our Lion's Ladies, without who's help and support would result in all of our activities being so much more difficult. They also make time to raise money for the "President's Wife's Charity" which this year is the UHCW Neonatal Unit .

Currently, they are on target to provide a Kangaroo Care Chair (a special nursing chair for premature babies that have spent the first weeks/months in an incubator) and a chill crib for babies that are still born.

**This report was prepared by
Dave Thomas
President of the Southam and District Lions Club**

Report for Southam Christmas Lights Association 2014/ 15

To be given at the Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 21st May 2014

I am Kelly Cooper the new Secretary for Southam Christmas Lights Association. On behalf of all the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Val Steele for her support and hard over the 13 years that she was a Committee Member.

2014 was the 14th year of organising the Southam Christmas Festival.

Thanks to the commitment & support of all the SCLA committee members, all volunteers, Southam Lions, Southam First, all Southam Town Councillors with the grant of £2,990, together with the fantastic support and donations from local businesses from the trading estates and in town shops and offices of £4,590.00. We, ourselves, organised a Quiz Night, two Street Collections, a collection outside Tesco and, a Balti Evening, at the local Indian Restaurant raising another £1,677.55. With the monies raised, we purchased some new lamppost motifs and continue to replace bulbs with ECO friendly LED coloured bulbs.

The evening of the "Switch On" Friday 28th November 2014 was very successful, Bob Brolly was the compare for the evening and the Southam Primary School Choir really set everyone in the Christmas mood. We had the benefit of gazebos and Santa's Grotto loaned by Southam First committee. The evening was supported by 1 retail stall and 12 local charity stalls. Father Christmas joined the Mayor to switch the lights on and then he walked down to his 'Grotto' where he saw and met the children. As always, this time of the evening is carefully controlled and the children are looked after by Southam Lions for which, we are always grateful for their help & support throughout the event. The Showman's Guild brought along rides and a few stalls which all added to the atmosphere.

People of all ages from the community came with their family and friends to support the event. The little ones especially, enjoyed the fun fair rides and seeing Father Christmas in their home Town. Everyone I spoke to on the evening was enjoying themselves and, as well as this, they were all helping local organisations and charities to raise funds. We also received many positive comments from the Public on how good the Christmas Lights looked this year.

Thank you to everyone for your continued help & support.

Submitted by Kelly Cooper – Secretary Southam Christmas Lights Association



ROYAL AIR FORCE AIR CADETS the next generation

2028 (Southam) Squadron
R(T)
Air Training Corps
Millar House
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Squadron Commander- Flight Lieutenant D.K.Moreton RAFV

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REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL 21ST MAY 2015

Mayor

2028 Squadron Air Training Corps has been in Southam since 1942 and has always attracted young people from both Southam and its surrounding Villages. My Squadron is proud to offer these young people opportunities to Fly, Shoot, participate in adventurous activities, gain a BTEC and play a direct role in this community all of which we continue to do very successfully. During 2014 the Royal Air Force Air Cadets began taking young people from age 12 which will expand the opportunities to more young people.

We continue to develop and expand with more new recruits in the pipeline. This is on no small part due to the endeavours of our Senior Cadets who now hold regular assemblies to recruit for the Squadron, mostly at Southam College which continues to be our main source of Cadets. We have a fantastic relationship with the Headmaster Mr Samra.

We have maintained and developed our commitment to offer Cadets the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and achieve two levels of BTEC in Aviation studies, equivalent to no less than 4 GCSE's currently.

During 2014 we travelled to the Mendips, Wolvey, Wellesbourne, Rough Close and Derbyshire for our Expeditions coming second overall in the Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing area for the most Duke of Edinburgh Awards gained including four Cadets attending St James Palace in London to receive their Gold Awards.

In 2014 we achieved 9 Bronze, 9 Silver and 4 Gold D of E Awards.

Air Cadets also get the opportunity to fly in both powered aircraft and in Gliders. In 2014 Cadets from Southam flew in both aircraft throughout the year flying out of both RAF Cosford and from Little Rissington in Gloucestershire although for most of the year places were in short supply to issues with pilot's availability.

Members will also know that in 2014 the Squadron was involved in collecting for the Annual British Legion Poppy Appeal and was proud to lead the Remembrance Day Parade once again with no less than 31 Cadets and 3 Staff on Parade. Last year, as every year, the Cadets were presented with a certificate by the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, Mr Tim Cox for their participation in the Poppy Appeal at a formal ceremony held in Warwick. In 2014 2028 Squadron raised just over £1580. We also took the opportunity to visit the Code Breakers Museum at Bletchley.

The highlight for the Squadron was the opportunity to spend a day with the Red Arrows at RAF Scampton and visit the memorial to our Ex Cadet Jon Egging, a very moving visit for us all.

During the year we continued to maintain the Holy Well on behalf of the Town Council and also took part in the Town Carnival and look forward to being involved again this year. Generally we have been involved in many community activities too many to mention but where possible we will take part to maintain the blue footprint in Southam.

A number of my Cadets have attended Courses at RAF Cosford, both for promotion to Corporal and also senior development courses, all designed to ready them for leadership positions within the Squadron.

Cadets from 2028 Squadron were able to spend Annual Camps at RAF Linton on Ouse, RAF Halton, Nesscliffe and Sennybridge, plus a week at HMS Bristol. We also held our bi-annual camp at Folkestone during Easter, taking 34 Cadets and 11 Staff.

Our Senior Cadet was appointed as Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for the Air Cadets in Warwickshire and members will like to know that 2028 Squadron now has the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for a second year in 2015.

We were also invited to send our Senior Cadet to a national conference held at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell to represent Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing, a great honour for 2028 Squadron. As a result of her feedback we now have a Cadet Council in the Wing.

The Cadets have taken part in Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Rugby, Soccer, Hockey and netball, representing the Squadron. One Cadet Captained the Regional and Corps level Netball Team.

So Chair I am pleased to say that 2028 Southam Squadron is very active and successful and continues to play an important role in the Town. We are respected throughout our Wing as a strong and proactive ATC Squadron with my Senior Cadets seen as a role model to other Senior Cadets in Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing. 2015 is also producing amazing opportunities for our cadets with the Squadron just being awarded the most improved Squadron.

Finally may I say that the Royal Air Force Air Cadets in Southam has always been there for any young person from as of last year 12 to 17 years of age and offers some very challenging but rewarding opportunities to achieve both academically and physically which will look good on any future CV or simply help them to become better members of our community. .

I commend the report to the Annual General Meeting



Daryll Moreton
Flight Lieutenant RAF VR(T)
Officer Commanding

Southam Civic Ideas Forum

SCIF exists to enable local people to comment on the condition of the fabric of the town so that those issues can be addressed by the appropriate authorities. Where appropriate we undertake to carry out some minor works ourselves if members are happy to do so. We hold regular meetings, currently held at the Craven Lane Hall and anyone can attend. The meetings for the remainder of this year are 10th July September 18th November 13th held at 10 am and will finish by 12 noon.

We have regular quarterly meetings with WCC representatives for Highways, who welcome and value our input, when we discuss the condition of the roads and footpaths and anything that they are responsible for. As a result of this activity we think that the roads and pavements of Southam are better than most other towns in the area. We have successfully replanted the willow walk at Stoneythorpe and undertake to trim the weeds around the trees until such times as they are well established which at the present rate of progress will be several years. We have the support of Stratford on Avon DC officers and have been invited to carry out projects on their behalf such as various audits of tourist accommodation, attractions in the area and highways signware, which have been much appreciated by them. We have lobbied the appropriate responsible local authorities about fly tipping on Daventry Road and will continue to monitor the site.

We have representatives on the committee from Southam First to enable us to be in touch with events that they organise and some of our members are also involved in redesigning a new tourist leaflet that Southam First is responsible for. In the past SCIF have produced two leaflets, one on the Holy Well Walk and the other on the Southam Town Walk. These leaflets have been distributed annually by members of SCIF to those places that tourists may visit or stay within a 10 mile radius and have been very well received by all concerned. We have also been involved in the annual town benchmarking exercise which is organised by Southam First.

We are currently active in pursuing Sponsorship of Round-a-bouts with the WCC and are awaiting the results of the trail phase that is currently taking place. In a previous incarnation SCIF were the group responsible for the restoration of the Holy Well and the laying of the path to it. In recent times we have had the cooperation of Town council member Jason Ward in controlling weeds along the path edges for which we are greatly indebted. We will continue to keep a watching brief on the condition of the Holy Well and will draw the attention of the STC to any maintenance that is required on this important tourist feature of our town.

The current condition of the St James Church Gates on Warwick Road is a blot on the landscape and does not give a good impression of our town as visitors enter Market Hill. St James Church PCC is not in a position to carry out repairs and is unlikely to be able to do so for a great many years as the fabric of the church building will always be a higher priority. SCIF has undertaken to restore and replace where necessary this entrance feature on behalf of the town, not the church, as it is a highly visible aspect of our town centre. After several years of negotiations and argument with the Victorian Society, the planning authority and the Diocese, SCIF has within the last twelve months obtained planning consent and a diocesan faculty, to carry out this project which will enhance this important entrance to that part of the town. We now need to raise the funding to do this and we would welcome any assistance that is available via any source.

SCIF is a group of dedicated local people who are concerned about our environment and are happy to work with the Southam Town Council for the benefit of our community. We invite the STC to appoint two councillors to attend meetings so that the Council is kept informed of our activities and we thank them in anticipation of their support.

The Melody Makers 2014-2015

The Melody Makers have had another very successful year. We are a ladies choir of more than 25 members who regularly attend rehearsals and have sung at many events in Southam and further afield over the past year.

We have diversely dressed up as Dalmatians in the Town Carnival, swum in the Leamington Soroptomists swimathon and sung at a concert to celebrate Wood Street Congregational Church's 175th Anniversary. We have entertained the Mothers' Union; the Parkinson's Society and sung at a party and a wedding.

Christmas is the highlight of a choir's calendar and last year was no exception. We gave a concert together with the Royal Naval Association Choir and Lillington Ladies choir, sang at Heathcote Hospital and the local Tesco store. In doing so, we have raised quite a considerable amount for charities and have had lots of fun doing so!

Alison Cragg

The Fosse Foodbank – annual report to Southam Town Council – May 2015

The Fosse Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust's UK-wide network of over 420 foodbanks run by local churches working together alongside grass root community organisations, statutory agencies, front-line care professionals, schools and businesses to provide emergency food to people in crisis.

Fosse Foodbank is administered by St. Peter's Church in Kineton, where the headquarters and warehouse are based. It is working with a network of rural churches to provide support for people in need from Wellesbourne in the west to Bishops Itchington and Southam in the north. Locally we are working with the Anglican, Congregational, Community and Roman Catholic churches.

Most foodbanks are set up in towns or cities, but people in rural areas also experience times of crisis, with one in five living below the poverty line. Today in Southam and the surrounding area, there are families struggling to put food on the table. For people on low incomes, a sudden crisis – redundancy, benefit changes, illness or just an unexpected bill – can mean going hungry. Our volunteers at the Centre have been very moved by some of the individual stories they have heard.

The Southam distribution centre of the Fosse Foodbank opened at the Graham Adams Centre in June last year. In addition to the centre, which is open on Mondays from 11.00am to 1.00pm, we are able to deliver emergency food parcels to clients' homes if they are unable to get to Southam.

But the Foodbank does more than provide food in an emergency. It works to address the root causes of clients' problems. It can help to prevent family breakdown, housing loss, crime and mental health problems. We have a great team of volunteers who take time over a cup of tea and biscuit to listen to problems and signpost people to other agencies for further support.

How it works:

- Food is donated by schools, churches, businesses and individuals etc. Food is also collected at supermarket collection points and special supermarket collections twice a year. The next supermarket collection at Tesco in Southam will take place on 2nd – 4th July.
- The food is transported by volunteers to the warehouse in Kineton where it is sorted and stored. Last year the warehouse received 9390kg of food.
- Frontline care professionals, such as doctors, health visitors, the Southam Children's Centre, local churches and the Bromford Trust identify people in crisis and issue them with a foodbank voucher. Last year 22 referral agencies issued 124 vouchers. The main reasons given were benefit delays or changes, unemployment, low income, sickness and homelessness.
- In Southam, the client then either visits the Graham Adams Centre where the voucher will be redeemed for food for three days or Emergency Food Boxes are delivered to their homes by volunteer drivers. Last year across Fosse Foodbank 150 adults and 85 children received food (41 adults and 17 children in the Southam area).

As well as helping at the distribution centre, our volunteers also get involved in taking food to the warehouse in Kineton, giving talks to local groups, helping at the Tesco's collections and fundraising. They are a very hard-working committed team.

We are very grateful to our tremendous team of volunteers, led by Mrs. Jackie Grey, the Distribution Centre Manager and Mrs. Dea Godley, her deputy; to Tesco for their support, to the Trustees of the Graham Adams Centre for allowing us to use their premises, and to all the locals who support our fundraising.

Rev. Gillian Roberts

On behalf of the Fosse Foodbank Steering Committee

Rotary Club of Southam

Report for Southam Town Council

The last year has been overshadowed by the untimely death in September of Rotarian Peter Jackson who had served the Rotary Club of Southam for 41 years. Peter's enthusiasm and friendliness has been sorely missed within Rotary and the local community. Peter, along with Mike Gaffney, had already started organising the Tree of Light which again raised over £2,000 for Acorns Children's Hospice. The other main charities we have supported this year have been Sand Dams, bringing fresh water to Kenya in an innovative way, and MacMillan Cancer Support but we have also been able to make smaller donations to other causes.

A highlight of the year was the success of Abi Ogden-Metherell in the Rotary Young Chef competition. Abi, from Southam College, won the district final in Rugby and then represented our district in the regional final in Builth Wells

where she was the youngest of the competitors.

The club now has 15 members and continues to meet on Tuesday lunchtimes at the Fox & Hen, Bascote Heath, where we enjoy fellowship and occasional speakers. We also exchange visits with other Rotary clubs in the local area. One new member has been recruited this year and another is about to join, both ladies. Anyone, male or female, interested in coming along to a meeting is invited to contact our Secretary, Jean Foster, by phoning 01926 812003 or visiting our website.

W E J Pease
President
Rotary Club of Southam
April 2015