

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE GRANGE HALL, THE GRANGE, COVENTRY ROAD, SOUTHAM ON THURSDAY, 11th MAY 2017 at 6:45pm

Present: Councillors: M Brooks - In the Chair
G Oubridge, S Exton, L Ellard, G Barratt, G Foster, M Connors. M Gaffney MBE TD, P Jenkins, K Toner

Approximately 40 Members of the public were present including: Mr B Cadogan, Mr M Hill, Mrs P McConnell, Mrs J Grey, Mrs T Sadler, Mrs J Frith, Mr S Cobley, Mrs S Forgan, Mr J Gwillam, Mrs R Hill, Mr M Hill, Mrs L Doyle, Mr N Chappell, Mr T Grey, Mrs M Childs, Mr A Walster

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Cllr A Crump, Mrs S Gascoyne, Ms E Longworth, Mrs S Meacham, Mrs J Ward, Mr J Steele, Mrs A Vickers, Mrs J Graham, Mr B Parker, Mrs K Palmizi

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 12th May 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record of the proceedings subject to the addition of 'a representative of the Grange Players gave a verbal report'

3. MATTERS ARISING

None

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Report of the Town Mayor for the year 2016/2017 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:

The Friendship Group
Southam WI
Southam Baha'is
Grange Hall Management Committee
2028 Southam Squadron
Southam Darby and Joan Club
VASA
St James Cof E Primary School
Rotary Club of Southam

Verbal Reports

Southam Twinning Association
Southam and District Lions Club
Southam Heritage Collection
Graham Adams Centre
Southam First
SCIF
Fosse Food Bank – Southam
Southam in Bloom
Southam Rotary Club 2000

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

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS RAISED BY ELECTORS**
There being no other business the meeting closed at 7:20pm

Appendix A

Mayors Report 2016/2017

I was delighted last year to be elected Mayor of Southam and have the chance to represent the town locally and in the wider community and the year seems to have flown by. When my time has allowed I've accepted as many invitations from the surrounding parishes and districts as possible; the intention to promote Southam and talk about common issues. I've met and made friends with many dignitaries, the so called "chain-gang", and conclude there is considerable interest in our neighbouring districts in Southam and what we have to offer.

This term has seen much needed respite from the drive to build new housing thanks to the adoption of Stratford District Council's Core Strategy though we are not entirely out of the woods yet. We need now to concentrate our efforts in getting the vital infrastructure and investment to support the growth the town will undergo in the next few years whilst protecting its` historic presence and valued assets.

Over the course of the coming term there will be new challenges to face, not least of which will be disruption from HS2 construction but I believe we are well placed to meet everything that comes our way.

Both Hilary and I feel privileged to have been part of the numerous events held in the town during the year and amazed by the commitment and effort by the people of Southam who readily give of their own time to make it all happen. Many groups have told me that their events have seen the best attendance for many years and I've tried to reflect that in my blog column in the Council newsletter. It seems

obvious to me the towns community spirit is not only alive and well but growing in strength with a desire to do more to celebrate our lovely town.

My chosen charities this year are Myton Hospice and the Warwickshire Air Ambulance and I'm pleased to announce the sum of £1,600 has been raised which will be split equally between the two. I'd especially like to thank Glen Cooper and the Better-than-Before participants who donated £250 to the fund whilst getting fitter in the process.

It is only left for me to thank my wife Hilary who has stood by me as consort throughout, my fellow councillors for not giving me too rough a ride as Chairman and to the office staff, Debbie, Denise and Carole who have supported me, put up with my sense of humour and continue to work tirelessly to keep the town ticking. Thanks to you all.

Mike Brooks – Retiring Mayor 2017

Appendix B

SOUTHAMFIRST

REPORT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – 11/05/17

Southam First has continued to organize, support and facilitate events in and around the town centre during 2016/17, including lending gazebos to stallholders at the Carnival and May Day Fete, providing financial administration and physical resources to enable and promote the Flower and Produce Show, assisting with the newly expanded Christmas Lights switch-on with storage for the lights, loan of gazebos and of the grotto for Santa, supplying the 'flagpole' Christmas trees for town centre businesses to complement the Christmas lights displays and organizing, promoting and stewarding the hugely successful French market.

The group continues to maintain and develop the town's community / tourism website – www.southam.co.uk. This site is regularly updated by our members with community, visitor and business information, a plethora of upcoming events. Its "What's On" listing and Community & Business directories can be utilized and added to free of charge by all businesses and voluntary groups in the area for promotional purposes. We provide stocks of the Visitor Information Leaflets to the Library and Grange Hall, and assisted Southam Civic Ideas Forum with the reprinting and storage of the Town Trail and Holy Well Walk guides. Once a Visitor Information Point is established in Tithe Place, we hope to be able to co-ordinate the volunteers required to service the leaflet stand.

Southam First also provided “Shop Local” posters to all town centre businesses free of charge to promote and support the use of Southam’s shops and services. These can be seen displayed throughout town in shop doors and windows, and came courtesy of our strong links with local design and print companies – Syclone Design and Aldine Print.

We have worked closely with Warwickshire County Council Infrastructure and Regeneration officers to support their county-wide business development workshops, and have recruited four new members to our Committee this year.

Currently, we are working hard on upcoming events for 2017 including the Flower and Produce Show in September and the 50’s Retro Revival in October – we are very appreciative of the grant funding provided by the Town Council to support these events. We are also working on a funding application to the HS2 Local Business and Economy Fund to finance an annual calendar of new and established events for Southam to promote and celebrate our town and encourage new visitors. The number of businesses represented on the group has grown and hopefully will continue to do so this year. We are also currently refreshing our social media presence.

Southam First works regularly with partner groups and organisations such as the Lions, the Heritage Collection, the Christmas Lights, Southam Twinning Association, SCIF, Southam WI, Tithe Lodge, France at Home and Tesco to help provide varied and good value events for Southam, and we look forward to working with them and others to improve and expand the events on offer in Southam this coming year.

Katherine Geddes
Chair

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Thursday 11 May 2017

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 a number of bookings well into 2019! The past year has, again, seen ‘peaks and troughs’ - a continuing sign of the times – but the good news is that we seem to be going in an upward direction. The Bar continues to provide additional much needed income for the Hall, and we strive to keep prices as competitive as possible. We continue to have a small but committed team of casual bar staff.

Our concert programme has been put on hold for the present; the Abba Tribute Evening was less successful than on the previous occasions, and the Rock n Roll Christmas event saw a poor audience and a very large loss. It is difficult to know what the people of Southam want. However, we shall continue to investigate events and, once finances have improved, then we

hope to resume some sort of programme. We are currently looking to provide Tea Dances on a Sunday afternoon, once a month; time will tell as to how popular these become.

The Town Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council continue their capital investment in the hall, and the new lighting in the Foyer is much appreciated. Our accounts will soon be with the Accountants. Unfortunately, the finances are not looking too healthy at present, and we have had to seek additional financial support from Southam Town Council to help us over this difficult time. We are extremely grateful to them for this extra assistance.

The committee continues to work hard; we have been fortunate enough to have some new members, but would not turn anyone away who wished to get involved.

As always, I should like to thank Mrs Louise Neal (our Caretaker), Mrs Carole Gwillam (our Administrator), the Management Committee members and, particularly Southam Town Council, for their continuing support.

Town Meeting Report – 2016/17

Southam Heritage Collection

In virtually all respects 2016/17 was as successful a year for the Collection as previous ones, but that isn't to say that nothing has changed or nothing different has happened – in fact much the opposite. In a short report like this I can only touch on some of the things that have happened, so here are just a few examples. Many similar activities were undertaken over the 12 months like the two major exhibitions – the first called “Cementing Relations”, and generously sponsored by CEMEX, explored the relationship between the town and the Cement Industry and was very popular as was a very well attended talk given by John Frearson, historian for the Rugby Cement Group in Tithe Place - the second exhibition called “Caring for the Wounded”, which photographically told the story of how wounded WW1 soldiers were cared for from the trenches right through to recuperation in hospitals like Southam's Red Cross Hospital here at The Grange, met with similar acclaim. In both cases, we had visitors arriving even after the closing dates!

In terms of new activities, we have greatly expanded our web presence with the addition of over 50 pages to the site including many featuring the stories of local women volunteering at the Grange VAD Hospital; we have been asked to contribute to the Geography, not History, syllabus at Southam College; we have been asked to support local businesses by providing photos for showcasing Southam's past at Christmas and for several Public Houses; we have been invited to showcase Southam's history at Harbury's WW1 Blue Plaque unveiling which was attended by the Lord Lieutenant for Warwickshire (the Queen's Representative) and the Chief of Staff for the Canadian Armed Forces in the UK; we have been chosen as one of the finalists for the Tesco "Bags of Help" project (and we ask for your support each time you shop at Tesco over the next two months) by asking for and placing a blue token in our box; we have a new photographic book from Alan Griffin focussing on WW2 and we have a series of notelets for sale featuring paintings of local scenes by Margaret Sherriff kindly donated by her sons. Last but not least we have formally changed the name of the organisation to the "Southam Heritage Collection" to make us more readily identifiable with Southam and in addition we have applied for formal recognition from the Charity Commission, having previously 'only' had recognition from HMRC.

Many people regularly ask when we will move into Tithe Place for Exhibitions – we believe this is currently being held up because of issues over "out of hours" access to the Community Rooms and SDC are working on this – now that we expect to receive formal Charity Commission recognition imminently we will be pursuing this issue much more vigorously.

Just to give you a hint of some of the things that are in-plan I would like to mention the annual renewal of 200 Club subscriptions which are due this month – only £5 for a chance to win one of 12 prizes in 12 draws over the next 12 months – tickets available tonight. We have a Local History Fair on Saturday May 20th at St James Church with many other local groups participating, family history expertise on site, book signings by Alan Griffin, antique valuations by Locke and England etc. etc., and starting with the next Bank Holiday we have our "Pint of Ale" exhibition featuring Southam's Public Houses which will open for the Summer/Autumn period. There's no grass growing under our feet!

Finally, I am delighted to have the opportunity to thank Southam Town Council, both as a group and as individuals, for their continuing support for the Collection both financially and vocally, and also District (and now County) Councillor Andy Crump for his success in addressing Business Rates issues with SDC on our behalf. Last, but by no means least I would like to thank our members, volunteers and the public at large for their continued support, without which we would not be able to achieve anything like as much as we have.

Thank you.

Bernard Cadogan
Chairman
Southam Heritage Collection
May 2017



2028 (Southam) Squadron
R(T)
Air Training Corps
Millar House
Wattons Lane
Southam
Warwickshire
CV47 0HX

Squadron Commander- Flight Lieutenant D.K.Moreton RAFV

Tel No - 01926 815390
E-mail – co@2028sqnatc.co.uk
Web Site – www.2028sqnatc.co.uk

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL 11th May 2017

Mayor

2028 Squadron Royal Air Force Cadets 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 in Aviation Studies and play a direct role in this community all of which we

continue to do very successfully. In recent times the Royal Air Force Air Cadets began taking young people from Year 8 which has expanded 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 and other Year Heads within our age range.

2016 also produced an amazing opportunities for our cadets by 10 of them accompanied by two of our Staff, taking part in a prestigious weekend at RAF Cranwell in August to celebrate 75 years since the Air Cadets were formed. They were accompanied by Flt Lt Moreton and Flying Officer Thorns from 2028 who was be in charge of the Cadets from all over the Wing. The event saw senior serving and also retired Royal Air Force Officers including the Chief of the Air Staff, take a salute and march past from an impressive parade. Our Cadets were part of the support party throughout the weekend and they played an integral part in ensuring the weekend was a total success. The Saturday finished with a display from our friends, the Red Arrows, an element of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the most fantastic Fireworks display. All proving beyond doubt what the RAF thinks of the Air Cadets.

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 2016 we travelled to various locations, Wolvey, Wellesbourne, Rough Close and Derbyshire for our Expeditions and rate highly in the Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing area for the most Duke of Edinburgh Awards gained during the year.

We gained 6 Bronze and 4 Silver Awards which for 2028 Squadron was a quiet year!

Air Cadets also get the opportunity to fly in both powered aircraft and in Gliders. In 2016 Cadets from Southam flew 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.

During the year we had only 4 Cadets experience flying and the same number go gliding.

Members will also know that in 2016 the Squadron was involved in collecting for the Annual British Legion Poppy Appeal and was proud to lead the Remembrance Day Parade once again, as every year with no less than 32 Cadets attending.

In 2016 our Cadets helped at the Guide Dogs open day and once again it was a great success. Our Cadets did a sponsored swim on behalf of Fisher House which is located at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and offers a family environment to our Armed Forces Heroes and their families with trained staff and volunteers who help with their rehabilitation. Both these events are now firmly on the Squadron Calendar.

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. We now have our own Recruiting Marquee which is used at all events where the Cadets are involved.

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.

During 2016 we held our Biannual Easter Camp at Folkestone, taking no less than 32 Cadets and 6 Staff, which once again was a tremendous success. The Camp involved the usual opportunity for our Cadets to visit the Battle of Britain Memorial overlooking the Channel and take time for reflection and feel proud of our RAF.

Cadets from 2028 Squadron were able to spend Annual Camps at RAF St Mawgan, Southwick Park, HMS Bristol and Nesscliffe. We also had Cadets go to Gibraltar and Cyprus!

We also had the first ever Cadet at Southam achieve a Qualified Aerospace Instructors Course Qualification after over 6 months hard work for him to get his very rare Blue lanyard.

The Cadets have taken part in Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Rugby, Soccer, Hockey and netball, representing the Squadron.

In the Athletics our Cadets came home with no less than 7 Golds, 2 Silver and 1 Bronze, with 4 Cadets from 2028 going on to the Regional Athletics.

I would also like to mention our Civilian Committee ably chaired by Councillor Mike Gaffney, who worked very hard throughout 2016, raising money to increase the amount of equipment we need to allow Cadets to take part in D of E, take exams and so decrease the need for parents to buy expensive kit.

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 RAFAC Squadron with my Senior Cadets seen as a role model to other Senior Cadets in Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing.

Finally may I say that the Royal Air Force Air Cadets in Southam has always been there for any young person from Year 8 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

Web Site – www.2028sqnatc.co.uk
Face Book Site – 2028(Southam Squadron) Air Training Corps

Rotary Club of Southam 2000 Report - 2017

Our activities have been numerous over the last 12 months.

Burns Night is an annual event, held at Harbury Village Hall, with a piper, traditional Burns meal and tasting of various malt whiskies. In January we had an extremely sociable evening, raising a good sum for our charities.

We organised, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Rugby Dunsmore, two 'Run for Rotary' races at Draycote Water, one in September, the other in February. Here we raised money for our charities and also collected a considerable sum for Water Aid.

We have held tin shakes at Tesco which were well supported by their generous customers. We helped with the Southam Carnival Parade and ran a Beer tent and book stall on Carnival Day last May, and will do the same this year.

11 of our members signed up for marshalling duties at the Two Castles Run, from Warwick Castle to Kenilworth Castle in June, which is organised by the Rotary Club of Kenilworth. Other nearby Rotary Clubs support the Kenilworth Club in this big logistical undertaking, and it's fun to cheer on the runners.

Southam College pupils did very well in the Rotary Young Chef competition, a national competition promoting the development of culinary skills nationwide. The Rotary Clubs of Southam sponsored and organised the local contest with the help of Southam College staff. Some of our members, together with those from the Rotary Club of Southam, judged the food by tasting the students' efforts at Southam College. This was no great hardship – delicious food and multiple samples to be tasted. Four finalists from Southam college went on to a Rotary District round, held at Rugby College, where winning contestants supported by Rotary clubs in the Midlands area vied for a place in the Young Chef regional finals. Southam college students and best mates Abigail Eggleston and Emily Aries, both aged 13, came first and second respectively, against other competitors some years their senior. Abigail went on to the Rotary Regional competition, where she again produced a wonderful three course meal and dressed a table for two. Unfortunately she was not the winner this time, again against much senior competition.

Locally we have made donations to Remap and Harbury E-Wheels. We have bought a syringe drive and kit for the Shakespeare Hospice, who operate, amongst other places, in Southam, and we have also supported a couple of their fund raising events. Another local concern to benefit from donations is Southam in Bloom and we are in the process of giving funds to the Childbirth Trust, Southam branch, for the purchase of baby slings. We have also given funds to Myton Hospice. A donation was made to Southam college (the Roger Carr

Award for Engineering) and presented at their awards evening to Harry Jones. We also gave to the Southam Poppy Appeal fund.

Nationally we have donated to Mablethorpe Holidays and to Kids Out, both of which are Rotary initiatives for disadvantaged and disabled children.

Internationally we have been involved in the Purple 4 Polio programme – Rotary clubs worldwide have for many years been involved in a programme to eradicate polio. The purple crocus is a symbol of Rotary's worldwide campaign to eradicate polio, with its colour representing the purple dye used to mark the finger of a child, to indicate they have received their life saving oral polio vaccine. This year there have been only 5 reported cases of polio world-wide, in Afghanistan and Pakistan. To raise the awareness of Rotary's campaign, the Rotary Clubs of Southam planted 5000 purple crocus corms in the grounds of Tithe Place. These made a beautiful display in the spring. In addition the Rotary Club of Southam 2000 has contributed to global funds to support the immunisation programme.

Another worthwhile cause we support is Shelterbox. A number of our members raised a significant sum by organising a candlelit supper in Napton, raising sufficient funds for the purchase of 2 boxes. This disaster relief charity provides emergency shelter and vital supplies to support people hit by disaster and humanitarian crises around the world. It distributes boxes containing items such as a tent, cooking utensils, mosquito nets and water purification equipment to people who have lost their belongings. We also, in conjunction with other Rotary Clubs, donated towards a scanner and training for the operatives for a hospital in India, and have given money to Aquabox, a Rotary charity that helps to provide clean water to children in third world countries. We also continue to support projects in Bwengu, Malawi, where Tony & Sue Melia, honorary Rotarians of our club, have dedicated their retirement, improving the lives of the residents of the village dramatically. We have also continued to support the education of a young man in India, and have donated money to a Rotary global project for solar panels and a generator at a children's hospital in Bo, Sierra Leone. In addition, one of our members, under his own initiative, has visited Uganda in a water cleansing campaign.

Our service to the community has included prison visits, recycling of reading glasses and ink cartridges, and helping at the local food bank collections at Tesco. We have supported Southam College by mentoring students and helping out on business and mock interview days. We also attended the opening of the Southam College ECO pond to which we had previously given money. We organise a holiday in Blackpool for quite a few senior citizens from Southam and nearby villages, which takes place in June annually, and which this year has been more popular than ever.

Annette Jackson

President of the Rotary Club of Southam 2000

Southam Civic Ideas Forum

Chairman's report for 2016/17

SCIF is a group of dedicated local people who are concerned about our environment and are happy to work with Southam Town Council and other agencies for the benefit of the community. All members make a contribution and it is my pleasure to thank everyone for the efforts that they make. In all we have held 3 meetings all of which are open to the public which anyone can attend and all have been interesting and productive.

We held most of our meetings at Crown Lane Hall at 10 am on the 2nd Friday bi-monthly. However our last meeting was held there in November as the Hall is to close for renovations and extensions. We have been offered the use of Vivian House, courtesy of the Southam Heritage Collection, until such times as we find another regular venue. We held daytime meetings to allow WCC Highway Officers, on a quarterly basis, to attend to discuss road, footpaths and associated works that have come to our attention. The result of these meetings has led to a better than average condition of our roads and footpaths. We have also held evening meetings, including our AGM, at the Southam Sports and Social Club to encourage those that are not available during the day.

In partnership with Southern First, members helped to update data for the town's Benchmarking survey, which involves a car parking audit, football courts, and business data collection.

Our main project is the repair and replacement of the Church Gates and we continue to make progress with fund raising. A presentation was made to the Southam Business Forum breakfast meeting on possible sources of funding and they have agreed to spread the word within the business community. Presentations were also made in Southam Rotary 2016 which was well received and resulted in a decision to fund the project. We now have letters of offers to contribute from local companies and people which together with cash held for this project gives us a total of £13,500 towards the total we need for the project of £40,000 plus. In cooperation with Southam Heritage Collection we have made an enquiry to the National Heritage Lottery fund to carry out a research project into that area of the town centre which covers the area of the steps and gates including the restoration of the gates and culminating in an exhibition of the project to be mounted at the Library in 2019. HLF were very supportive of the research element of the project but did not support the restoration of the steps and gates. We are now proposing to apply to the HER community fund via the Southam Town Council application bid.

We successfully updated both the Town Trail and the Holy Well Walk leaflets and were able to have these reprinted and distributed with aid of a grant from Southam Town Council and generous donations from local businesses. This was due to the efforts and hard work of committee members. We have cooperated with the Town Council in an attempt to have a Visitor Information Stand at The Place close to the newly opened library and volunteer members help to keep it updated with relevant information and leaflets. We are continuing to press for new public notice boards to replace those at the Library grounds.

We continue to monitor the progress on the Sponsored Roundabout trial which is being dealt with by the WCC. Members took part in the Beach Marking Survey that is run by the Southam Firm Group. Representations were made to the WCC Highway Dept via Southam Town Council concerning the condition of the Kieroch Road Roundabout and as a result it has now been refurbished with new tarmac and planting.

We continue to maintain the Willow Walk close to Steadyhope Mill and can report that we have all areas growing which hopefully will become established in time the avenue we recently hoped for. Members continue to monitor the directional and information signs to and at the Holy Well. We also monitor the condition of the Holy Well and work has been carried out via Southam Town Council to address the drainage issues there.

In general SCIF has had a year of satisfactory progress and all members can be proud of that.

Southam In Bloom Report - 2017

Throughout the summer months of 2016 we all enjoyed the floral display in pink, purple and white, all around the town. This display was enhanced by the many local shop owners who purchased baskets for their premises.

The town-entry planters were mainly planted by committee members whilst the small planters around the town were planted and cared for by members of our loyal band of helpers.

The plants and their watering cost a great deal of money. We could not exist without the grants we receive from STC, the sponsorship of individual baskets, troughs and planters kindly given by local businesses, and donations given very generously by members of the public. We are very grateful for all of these.

In 2016 we held our usual fund-raising events. We held a plant stall at the Lions May Day Fayre. On Carnival Day some of us joined the parade as characters from the Wizard of Oz and then helped man our plant stall. In July we held a street collection and in November we had a bottle stall at the Christmas Lights Market.

In July we held our biennial Front Garden and Container Competition. The town was divided into 9 areas and all the front gardens in each area were judged by judges who were brought in from outside Southam. There were awards for best front garden and best container in the different areas of town and for the overall winners. We also had

an award for the best business and best community area. The award ceremony was held at the Graham Adams Centre in October when the Deputy Mayor presented the certificates and trophies.

I would now like to thank all those who make the town's floral display possible: my fellow committee members, our Helpers (around 20 in all), who not only care for planters but also give invaluable help at fund-raising events, Peter Healey and his team at Greenleaf Nursery, and Tony and Brian Bromwich for watering the baskets and planters.

We now look forward, in 2017, to another summer of Southam in glorious bloom.

Tessa Sadler

Chairman

Southam In Bloom

Southam Bahá'ís – April 2017

Paddy and Ann Vickers sold their millionth leaflet on behalf of the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop during the past year. (Paddy and Ann started the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop when they lived within the Warwick district, and kept the name when they moved to Southam in 1983.) The "Bookshop" is not a physical shop, but sales are made online and at conferences and it is run on a voluntary basis. There are now more than 60 different leaflets available on different topics and in recent years the bookshop has branched out into producing small books and also a quiz board game. All the publications have been printed by Clintplan in Southam. Leaflets and books are exported to other English-speaking countries across the world.

SOUTHAM DARBY AND JOAN CLUB

Beech Loft
5 Warwick Road
Southam
CV47 0JL

22 April 2017

SOUTHAM TOWN MEETING 11 May 2017 5.45pm

Southam Darby and Joan Club meet at Watons Lodge, Park Lane, Southam on the first Friday of the month from 2pm – 4.30pm

We now have a membership of 50 which includes the helpers. We seem to lose a few members each year due to their age, but we regain new ones as well. This now includes 3 gentlemen for which we are very pleased about.

We had a varied programme this year including interesting Speakers, Musical Entertainers, Exercises, Strawberry Tea and outings which include luncheon. We also have our very popular Bingo at most meetings, which they do enjoy.

We collect for two charities, Myton Hospice and the RNLA, which we alternate each month.

We had a Tombola Stall at the Lions Fete and also at the Carnival, and we also have a Raffle each month. All these help with funds. Members pay £1 per meeting which includes tea and cakes made by our committee.

We are always pleased to welcome new members to our Club where they can meet old and new friends in a happy and fun loving environment.

Transport can also be arranged by contacting Jacky Graham on 813652 or Ann Jakeway on 814294.

Southam Melody Makers 2016/17 Annual Report

The Southam Melody Makers ladies choir is celebrating its 7th Birthday this year. We continue to grow and the members are always full of enthusiasm.

We sang our way around the Carnival route, and for weddings at St. James's Church and Warwick House. We also gave a concert with the Royal Naval Association male voice choir in Warwick.

Christmas is an exceptionally busy time of year for the choir; we sang at the Guide Dog centre in Bishop's Tachbrook where we had a hilarious time, and at the Advent service at St. James's.

The Christmas lights switch on in Southam was a highlight for us this year, with the lantern parade thro' the town. We were also invited to sing at the Stockton Christmas tree lights switch on and we entertained the residents of Galanos House.

We donate regularly to "Music And The Deaf" and Muscular Dystrophy. Also profits from our Annual Spring Concert in the Congregational Church in May, is this year going to support Southam Christmas lights.



THE ROTARY CLUB OF SOUTHAM

"Service Above Self"

Tuesday, 12.45 for 1.00 pm, Fox and Hen, Bascote, Southam, Warwickshire
(Except Tuesdays following Bank Holidays)

President Rotarian Mike Gaffney, MBE, TD, PHF

The Rotary Club of Southam is now in its 46th year and continues to serve the Southam community. Currently we have fourteen members and they have given another good year of service, fellowship, fund raising and contribution to overseas aid.

In Southam we support the Carnival, Christmas Lights and we have a link with Southam College with various Rotary Youth projects and the Interact Club which we founded in 2005 with our daughter club Southam 2000.

We regularly send tools through Tool Aid to Africa to encourage locals to start up their own businesses and jointly with our mother club in Kenilworth we support an overseas education project.

We organise the annual Tree of Light as part of the Christmas Lights which to date has raised £ 25,000 for Acorns Children's Hospice through the generosity of local residents and we organise an Annual Whist Competition and Quiz as a community service.

Jointly with Southam 2000 in October 2016 to mark the End Polio Now campaign we provided 1000 purple crocuses which were planted in the garden at Tithe Place

This year our two nominated charities are Marie Curie and the MS Society.

11th May 2017

Mike Gaffney

REPORT FOR SOUTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Introduction

VASA (Voluntary Action Stratford on Avon District) is a non profit offering services to the residents of Stratford on Avon District to help alleviate isolation and loneliness to promote well being and independent living.

We currently have two offices in the district. Stratford upon Avon and Shipston on Stour.

We provide a volunteer transport services to over 3000 residents in the district covering Southam, Alcester, Shipston and Stratford Districts.

In the past year we have also added new services such as day care services, carer respite, community activities such as lunch clubs and tea groups. We also loan out wheelchairs to local residents.

The Results

1. We undertake an average of 25 000 medical and social inclusion journeys each year for local residents
2. We have over 150 volunteer drivers in the district
3. We have over 3000 clients who use our community transport service
4. We host three lunch clubs with over 20 attendees at each and are planning a lot more
5. We host three day services for up to 12 attendees and are planning three more
6. We host 2 carer respite services and are planning 4 more

7. We loan out wheelchairs to residents in the district for no cost. On average we have 20 wheelchairs out on loan each week.

1. The Journeys

Of the journeys undertaken so far:

- **69%** are health journeys i.e. GP's, hospital, operations, opticians, physio, chiroprapist etc
- **9.2%** are mental health journeys
- **14.2%** are social services journeys
- **7.6%** are rural and social inclusion journeys

2. The Journeys in 2016/17

VASA are poised to deliver over 30 000 journeys in the year 2017/18. The delivery from Southam office is:

- **8.9%** of all journeys (expected c25 189) are from Southam town i.e. 2244
- **2.8%** of those are mental health trips.
- **91%** of those are community health journeys
- **6.68%** of those are social services (adults) journeys

4. The Review of the Community Transport Service

All VASA services underwent a review process in July/August 2016.

Community transport service showed a significant deficit which can be attributed to several factors:

1. **Over staffing i.e. four paid part-time staff accumulating 56 hours in a 37-hour week in a service that should be volunteer led.**
2. **Excessive use of overtime from part time staff due to long opening hours and a manual booking service.**
3. **Poor management of the service**
4. **A paper based system that increased hours and did not allow collection of data or auditing**
5. **Using a sliding scale admin fee with collection implemented by volunteer drivers thus increasing overall administration costs in the office**
6. **Lack of management of satellite offices resulting in volunteer dissatisfaction, higher costs and increased rentals in offices not suitable for data protection and lone working.**
7. **A poor telephone system that didn't allow filtering of calls, voicemail or out of office services and incurred high costs**
8. **The service was no longer volunteer led in the office**

To correct this, VASA installed a computerised transport system that:

1. **Reduced the need for the existing number of hours from paid part time staff**
2. **Cut all overtime**

3. Improved management through systems and proven data
4. Replaced the paper system and collects traceable/auditable data
5. Monitors the collection and payment of admin fees from drivers by allowing BACS payments and cash payments
6. Allows Stratford office to book journeys for all regions in the district enabling us to close regional offices if necessary eg: Alcester was suspended due to non-compliance with lone working and data protection policies
7. Installed a VOIP phone system with set monthly charges, call filtering to appropriate depts., voicemail, out of office services reducing overall costs
8. We have recruited and trained 16 new office volunteers to man the phones and book the journeys and match the drivers.
9. We reviewed the individual costs and income for each office. We sought additional funding for the outlying offices to keep these open. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful.
10. The Southam office came under review due to it being the most expensive of the outer offices and despite talks with Southam Town Council and other potential funders we were unsuccessful with our bids, sadly resulting in the closure of the Southam office. However, the volunteer drivers will continue with bookings being taken in our Stratford upon Avon office using the same telephone number.
11. We were saddened to learn on the 2nd May, that Southam Town Trust will no longer fund the journeys of our clients who are registered under the bus pass scheme after the 31st May 2017. We will work to support those clients that are affected by this loss of support and will promote any alternative services.

5. Drivers Evaluation Report September 2016

VASA has offered a volunteer transport service since 1979. It has been some time since a full review of the service has been carried out and with many changes to the charity sector, the way many charities are funded and the new structure at VASA itself, it was decided that the review should start with the volunteer drivers who provide the front-line service and are the ones who get to know our clients and their needs.

One of the first things we did was to look at the branding of the service. It had been branded as Volunteer Services. It was felt that this did not explain what the service was, who was providing the service and it was confusing as the organisation also offered volunteer recruitment and support. It was decided that the service would be rebranded 'Community Transport' in line with many other similar services nationally. In September 2016, VASA undertook an evaluation of the 152 volunteer drivers currently registered under Community Transport. The office volunteers were asked to complete a separate evaluation that included questions about the new software and processes that meant the two sets of volunteers evaluations could not be completed together.

The drivers questionnaire was sent by email or paper copies were posted when requested and were also available in all of the local offices. In the time period allotted, **57 evaluations** were returned. As the evaluation is being used for several reports to support funding bids for the service and as part of the service review, it was

felt that this was enough to complete a benchmarking report for the VASA Board of Trustees, our funders and to report back to the volunteers.

Evaluation Results

The questionnaire asked the volunteers to answer the following five questions:

	Agreed	Disagreed	No difference /no answer
The volunteer felt their role made a difference to the service users.	96%		4%
The volunteer had a greater feeling of engagement in their community.	81%		19%
The volunteer felt they had learnt new skills or gained experience through their role.	47%	9%	44%
The volunteer had an increased understanding of the difficulties faced by the service users.	96%		4%
The volunteer felt that their own health and feeling of wellbeing had improved since volunteering.	70%	7%	23%

Satisfaction Survey Results

A further three satisfaction survey questions were asked as part of the service review for improvement.

	Yes	No	Not sure or not answered
Did the volunteer feel that VASA should be offering further training?	26%	37%	37%
Could the service be improved?	39%	11%	51%
Would the volunteer recommend volunteering to others?	89%		11%

Social Inclusion

We also took the opportunity to explain to the drivers about the need for social inclusion journeys by sending the following:

‘Social Inclusion journeys have become a part of the majority of Community Transport Services nationally over the last few years. This is following research such as the **Campaign the End Loneliness**, where the physical effects of loneliness have been proven to be much greater than thought. For example, loneliness is as physically harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day. A trip to a lunch club, a support group or visiting friends who are also unable to get out can reduce these effects dramatically. Therefore, VASA have introduced social inclusion journeys as part of our Community Transport. However, we do understand that as a volunteer

driver, you originally volunteered for medical journeys. We do not expect any drivers to accept any social inclusion journeys if they wish to undertake medical journeys only. There have been some issues raised and we would like to take this opportunity to clarify these points.

- We are recruiting more volunteer drivers to help cover the additional journeys.
- No driver needs to accept a journey that they feel uncomfortable with. Please let the office know if you have any concerns.
- Journeys are charged at the same rates.
- New computer software has been written specifically for our service which will enable Alison and her team to support the clients and our drivers with these changes. This will be installed soon.'

The volunteer drivers were then asked if they would agree to undertake social inclusion journeys as part of their role.

The results were

74% of current drivers agreed to carry out social inclusion journeys alongside medical journeys

11% wished to continue with only medical journeys

16% were not sure or did not answer the question.

The comments received from those who were unsure included:

"I am concerned about the cost of the journeys as these would have to be double journey"

"I couldn't wait for someone to finish at a lunch club or visiting friends like I do with a hospital appointment"

"We are already in need of more drivers for medical journeys"

These are all valid concerns and ones we would like to address within this report.

- We are recruiting drivers all through the autumn months with adverts in publications. We have already had stands at several events to promote the service and recruit volunteer drivers and office volunteers. We will also have a permanent display in the new Stratford upon Avon hospital.
- Journeys to lunch clubs and support groups can be shared by three people attending, thus sharing the costs of the double journey. We are also recruiting volunteers just for these journeys. We are also looking at alternative transport such as the Lions minibus to take a number of clients to lunch clubs.
- The new software will enable the office volunteers and staff to match these journeys more quickly and with local volunteers. The software will show us when the driver is normally available, any holidays booked, the type of journeys (such as only local) journeys the driver has agreed to make and if there are any more clients attending the same club/group that could be offered a car share.

Concerns and questions

From the feedback, the following comments and concerns were made:

The office staff had not been made aware that the evaluation was for drivers and why they had not been included.

We are aware that not all volunteers were made aware of this, this was an error and our procedures for getting information to all office volunteers are being reviewed and team meeting are being organised for all of the outer offices to discuss their own reviews and the procedures moving forward.

One driver suggested that clients be given drivers telephone numbers if their journey is out of office hours in case they had to cancel the journey.

We would not advise that clients be given drivers personal contact details and no personal details will be given through the office to them. Some of our more vulnerable clients may not understand some boundaries and may contact drivers inappropriately. It also prevents some of our clients contacting drivers to book journeys directly with them. All journeys need to be booked through our offices to ensure that drivers are covered under our public liability insurance.

We are reviewing the procedures and will ensure that we will do all we can within our confidentiality procedures to ensure that contact between the office, drivers and clients is improved.

Could the office clarify the waiting time as the driver had been told that the wait would be one hour but on the appointment letter it clearly stated a wait of up to four hours.

We can only give you the information passed to us by the client. Again, the new software does prompt these questions which we hope will reduce any further incidents.

Could the office staff find out if the house is easy to find, a driver searched for a house that was tucked behind other houses.

Again, the new software prompts these questions but if drivers could call in with these types of findings, we can make sure they are logged for the next journey to that address.

Office volunteers have not been properly briefed on what a social inclusion journey is?

Each volunteer and office has received a written briefing by email and to the office itself to pin up. The service manager also visited the offices for an afternoon tea or coffee morning to explain the changes in person but we understand not everyone could attend. We have been providing training for all office staff and volunteers on the new software and social inclusion throughout Nov and Dec 16. This will continue in January 17

More notice please!

We do try to give as much notice as we can. We allow 3 working days notice at the moment and we will be contacting our clients in early 2017 to ask them to give as much notice as possible. The new systems allow us to take bookings months in advance so clients could call as soon as they get their appointment. However, some

drivers don't want to book too far ahead so the new transport system should help both.

More newsletters and get-togethers to meet other drivers and understand how we work.

We are organising a calendar of regular get-togethers and improving the way we share information (both ways). The service is dependent on our drivers and we want to improve the way we support them all.

Where do the drivers go while the client is at a lunch club, in the hospital we can always go to the coffee shop.

With these journeys, we would not expect drivers to wait, we hope that most journeys would be shared and due to the nature of the journey, the clients understand they will be double journeys. We will also only use local drivers so that there is the opportunity to go back home.

Could we request clients to carry blue badges if they have one?

Yes, we will make sure that this is included on our database.

Could we know what the client is going for so we can estimate the time they will be there?

Confidentiality means we cannot ask such direct questions but we should certainly be ascertaining time scales when booking the journey to pass on to the driver.

Could they have a computer booking system in local offices?

Yes, We are implementing this.

Can clients be made aware of costs, especially if we have to go back?

Definitely, the new system uses maps to calculate the distance and any dead miles or fees so the client can be told the full cost of the journey.

Comments

"I am much more aware of difficulties facing folk."

"I am frequently surprised at how much people value our service. Not just clients but nice comments from neighbours and relatives."

"More funding to allow the offices to be open for longer."

"I get a lot of satisfaction from the time I give."

"Almost without exception the service users have spoken of their gratitude that the service operates for their benefit."

"An up to date computer system in the Shipston office"

This has been done in November

"Many clients comment on how much they not only appreciate, but depend on the service."

"Has certainly resulted in meeting more local residents and getting to know the geography of the local area."

"Makes me appreciate my relatively healthy state."

"I think that volunteering is a great way to contribute if you have spare time. It is especially needed in our rural communities where the bus services tend to be very modest."

"We make a huge difference to the people we take on journeys."

"I've improved my customer skills through this role and it has helped me connect with more members of the community."

"Has greatly improved my understanding and patience."

"This has helped me appreciate how lucky I am."

"Providing additional non-medical journeys to ensure individuals who have no transport are not so isolated"

Thank you for the lovely comment, that is our aim but we need your help.

Community Transport is at the heart of the community and can make a huge difference in overcoming social and rural isolation preventing loneliness and improving wellbeing.

"I find it has helped my overall confidence and feeling of worth."

"Additional drivers would help us provide additional services for those who can't leave their houses."

"I find some people are very lonely and miss the company of others. Having a driver to take them to 'events' would greatly enhance their lives."

"It's giving back to the community."

"I always have very appreciative feedback."

"Most find our service quite invaluable."

"I get to meet all kinds of people with whom paths would otherwise not cross."

"A whole swathe of rural poverty exists because of poor transport links."

A very well put point.

All users have different difficulties and this widens my understanding of the problems they may have."

"The proposed social inclusion journeys will in my opinion devalue the current role of the service."

We understand your feelings and would like to assure everyone that no driver needs to agree to any journey they are uncomfortable with. The new system will show those drivers who will only undertake medical appointments and you will not be asked to carry out any social inclusion journeys. However, we would like to make the point that many of these journeys prevent the problems that cause the medical journey which is why VASA has taken the decision to include these.

"Unless there is already an agency that offers this, lifts to day centres for lonely people are needed, and also visits to friends and those in hospital."

"Everyone is grateful for the service which VASA provides."

"I have always strived to serve the community in which I live."

"As many people as possible should contribute to their communities."

"The clients look forward to seeing us. Sometimes it is the only chance they have to get out of the house."

This is why we feel social inclusion is so important and the drivers are in the centre of the communities so can make a huge difference.

"I do feel that I am doing some good in my community by helping to take people to their appointments."

"I think it is very rewarding and worthwhile."

"I really enjoy the coffee mornings, as it gives the opportunity to meet other volunteers."

"This is a wonderful service, especially for people who are housebound or isolated."

"I would prefer as much notice as possible for a booking so that I can organise my diary."

Training

The following training issues were raised or comments made. We have implemented a new induction for all of our volunteers and offering training where there is a need or it has been requested. We hope to start a programme of workshops from January 2017.

- **Advice to deal with clients with mental health issues.**
- **First Aid**
- **Help to transfer/aid clients in and out of the car**
- **A re-hash of the do's and don'ts**
- **The correct way to help someone who needs help walking.**
- **"The first person I took got back in the car after her appointment and said it's definitely terminal cancer, there's nothing we can do."**
We are here to support drivers, please do call us if you do get to hear such terrible news and need to offload. We will certainly look at this as part of our training programme.
- **Confidence to help our clients feel safe and comfortable.**
- **Listen and be more attentive with each client we collect! We remove any anxiety they may be under!!!**
We will be offering a listening skills workshop if anyone would find this useful.
- **Advanced driving course**
- **A couple of dry runs as an observer to an experienced driver would have been useful before going 'solo'.**

In Conclusion

The training needs are quite clear from this evaluation and VASA is now rewriting the whole induction of drivers and volunteers. We have also been made aware of the perceived divide between drivers and the office staff and addressing this in 2017. It is apparent that all our volunteer drivers seem to love their role and the difference it makes in the community.

Over the last few years, VASA seems to have lost sight of the fact that the drivers are the front line, they are the support and befrienders for the communities. They build the relationships, not the offices as we keep getting told. It is only a sample but from this

and anecdotal evidence we've heard from them, the drivers are not involved in the offices unless they need to get a form or work both roles. They are asking for more information and to see the office staff/volunteers more often. With this in mind, we are hosting pop in coffee mornings and quarterly get-togethers. We now have a dedicated team member 7 hours a week to look after our volunteers.

The drivers also dislike the paper systems and have asked for a better, computerised matching system. This is now in place.

We held a review with the manager of the service and the head of services to ensure that these issues were attended to immediately. Unfortunately, the manager of the service resigned after the review and subsequent meetings.

7. Recruitment of new volunteers for the office and as drivers

During the review, it became clear that VASA had moved away from the service being volunteer led and telephone operators and office staff were paid.

We have corrected that by recruiting 20 new office volunteers to answer the telephones on community transport and take bookings, match drivers and collect fees. This is an ongoing procedure.

Other Considerations

VASA's work with WMAS is growing.

We are talking to the ambulance services about increasing the journeys we offer in the Stratford on Avon District.

Our new Community Transport Manager, Kim Walker, has been tasked with setting up a division of community drivers with police force backgrounds for this purpose. This will further increase VASA's community transport service in the district.

In Conclusion

It has been a difficult year of transition for VASA but one that we believe will have served to strengthen our current services and ensure that VASA continue to grow in the coming year.

VASA has dipped into its reserves to implement this transition and is therefore still dependent on funding from third parties. We know that within the next 6 months we will have other income streams from new services and the community transport should again reach its full potential and add new services ensuring more self-sustainability in the years to come.

It would help us complete this transition if the parish councils in the district were willing to help fund the community transport service proportionate to their usage and help fund us this year.



Southam WI Annual Report 2017

Southam Women's Institute, which is part of the Warwickshire Federation, currently has 38 members who meet on the first Tuesday of each month in St Mary's School, Southam. There has been a slight increase in our membership

this year, and we look forward to welcoming even more, with the increased number of houses in Southam.

Once again we have enjoyed a wide variety of speakers ranging from a talk on Queen Elizabeth 1's links with Kenilworth Castle and a house in Long Itchington, to a gentleman who worked with Morecambe and Wise and then went on to own a donkey sanctuary. We had a really interesting talk from a lady who owns and manages a wood, which we are planning to visit in early May in order to hopefully see the bluebells, if we've timed it right! We have been shown how recyclable materials can be made into jewellery, handbags and lampshades, and then Bryan Davis, an ex protection officer with West Midlands police, explained to us the precision in the way VIPs were escorted and the system used by the outriders.

Not that our meetings have been all about listening. We have had an evening of performing several short plays, which was a great success, and another of playing games of curling, Jenka, Connect 4 and other board games.

Outside of our meetings some members have enjoyed theatre trips, games evenings and also 10 pin bowling, which was great fun.

Eating plays a part too, as in August we organised a lunch for members in the Cricket Club, we had a coffee and mince pie morning in December and we had a lovely post Christmas meal at the Bowling Green in January. We also celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday with prosecco and cake.

We have continued to raise funds and collect items for good causes such the WFWI Collection Appeal and the Christmas Boxes. Locally we have supported the Southam Christmas Lights Association and Southam in Bloom. Knitted squares have been created to make blankets which we have presented to Galanos House and the Blue Cross. We also helped with the Produce Show by providing refreshments for the visitors.

The committee has once again worked hard for our members and we look forward to another successful year as in April 2018 we shall be 90 years old.

Southam WI

25 April 2017