An aerial photograph of a village in Amersham, showing rolling green hills with patches of orange-brown, a large green tree in the foreground, and rooftops of buildings. The sky is blue with light clouds.

AMERSHAM
and district
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL
NEWSLETTER

autumn 2007



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*Letter from the Chairman – Bron Curley
November 2007*

Dear Members,

Welcome to the 2007 ADRA Newsletter. In this issue you'll find as usual the minutes of our Annual General Meeting held this year April 26 in Amersham Free church. Attendance was very good this year I'm pleased to note.

Tony Glyn-Jones gave a talk on the topic of Satisfaction through Sharing and Service, recounting the personal satisfaction which he has gained by sharing his talents and time in serving the community. It was understandably well received and as always, participation in the forum was lively.

Please help us to represent you by making your views known. Join us at a committee meeting if there's something you would like to discuss. If you have even an hour or two to spare, we could use your help in delivering newsletters and collecting subscriptions. We are a volunteer organisation, and we need more volunteers!

Please join us at our Annual Social evening, January 17 from 7pm to 9pm in the large Barn Hall at the Amersham Community Centre. We all look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,



Bron Curley

The Cover picture was taken by Martyn Loach from St Mary's Church tower, looking up towards Amersham on the Hill, across the field of poppies below Rectory Woods.

Amersham & Districts Residents' Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 26th April 2007 at Amersham Free Church Hall

Chairman's Welcome The Chairman welcomed the members to the 47th Meeting of ADRA.

Apologies for Absence Cllr Pam Appleby, Eve Blenkinsopp, Liz Boxshall, Mr & Mrs Burkhill, Lee Cohn, Mr & Mrs Coulstock, Jane Denny, Cllr Vera Head, Valerie Hickling, Carmel Hicks, Mr & Mrs Newman, Celia Palmer, Mr & Mrs Sherlock, Carolyn Spencer, Liz Walsh, Mr & Mrs Walton.

Minutes of AGM held on 26th April 2006 Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by John Guest and seconded.

Treasurer's Report (Geoff Platts)
The Treasurer explained that the increased balance was due to an ADRA member's generosity in covering the cost of printing the Newsletter. He also stated the Association would like to do more to benefit its members whilst ensuring that there are always adequate funds for allocation of expenses should a suitable candidate wish to stand for election to the District Council. An increase of membership meant subscriptions would now be £6 per household / £4 per single resident.

The Chairman explained that the signatures at the bottom of the balance sheet were not missing, but on the reverse. They will be published in the annual newsletter.

Planning Officer's Report (Bridget Woods)
As attached.

Highways Report (Geoff Platts)
As attached.

Environmental Officer's Report (Ann Terry)
As attached.

Chairman's Report (Bron Curley)
As attached.
Mr Alan Smith was co-opted onto the Committee. Proposer: Kevin Dyer, seconder: Mr Croser. My Kevin Dyer had decided to retire in the Autumn. The Chairman thanked Kevin for his services.

Re-election of Committee
There were no committee members up for re-election.

Re-election of Auditor
Ernest Newhouse had agreed

to continue as Auditor. His re-election was proposed by Mr Croser and seconded by Mr. Makins.

- The Chairman introduced Mr Tony Glyn-Jones who gave a talk on “satisfaction from service and sharing”.

- **Open Forum**

The formal business of the meeting having been concluded, the proceedings continued in the manner of an Open Forum.

- Mrs Barbara York had sent the Chairman an email about the mess on the corner of Woodside Road and Chiltern Avenue. All other prominent corners have flowerbeds being installed. She feels strongly that something should be done about the tree cutting and brambles.

The Chairman had contacted the Town Council who said it belongs to BCC. CDC is currently maintaining the verge by cutting the grass, although that particular site has not been allocated their responsibility. The issue of parking on the verge was also mentioned.

The Chairman said complaints received re. verges last year resulted in them being cut three times, in total, whilst they have been cut twice this

year already.

- At the development opposite the station, pavement has been left in poor state because of contractors’ vehicles. It was suggested that contractors should be forced to reinstate by County.

ADRA will follow up.

- To the concern raised about development rights in the field off the A404 between the Coleshill turning and the roundabout onto the A413 towards Coleshill where a notice is advertising 78 acres for sale for investment, the Chairman replied that there were speculative housing ventures all over the country similar to the potential case in Copperkins Lane. The prospect of possible Green Belt development encourages this.

- Roz Long enquired about Amersham’s plans for attempting to deal with anti social behaviour re. seats on Oakfield Corner which is distressing for the public.

The Chairman stated the Town Clerk advised people to keep a log of when spoken to offenders as recommended by the Anti Social Behaviour Officer. Many people feel current community policing is inadequate. This request to

maintain a log might not seem feasible but police are not always able to be as omnipresent as we would like. The ASO meets with the police every two weeks and, on the basis of reports received from residents, they allocate resources. If the ASO were equipped with logs regarding ongoing aggravation then the police would have to act.

DDOs: The Chairman has received assurance that under the Act of 2000, certain areas can be made zones where alcohol is not permitted. There has been a request to apply these restrictions to Amersham. CDC is about to go to the Public Consultation Phase (hopefully before the summer). Town Council requested that public areas in Amersham be the subject of DDOs. Areas will be playing fields, Oakfield Corner, cemeteries and other public places. Signs have already been made up. It is anticipated

that ‘Powers will soon be granted to address the problem.’

- It was noted that the Alleyway from Hill Avenue through to Station Road by Dancer Boutique has litter problems and sometimes drains are overflowing, with a request that pressure be brought to bear on whoever is responsible.
- Mr Ernest Woodhouse said he was impressed by the Committee and grateful for work done on residents’ behalf.
- Mr Croser asked the meeting for a show of their appreciation of ADRA’s good work.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:55pm.

AMERSHAM AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2006
(including for comparison a summary for 2005)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

<u>2005</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2006</u>
£		£	£		£
1317	Subscriptions	1285-64	215	Printing, stationery postage & telephone	125-31
14	Donations	-	69	Adverts for AGM	-
			187	Hire of Halls	202-75
59	Bank Interest	87-73	33	Affiliation Fee	33-00
			195	Insurance	205-00
			84	Social Evening	95-29
			126	Millennium Garden	146-94
	Adverts In		91	Planning Lists	-
	Newsletters		58	AGM Refreshments	75-53
470	2005		32	Website Registration	-
	2006	325-00	300	Christmas Lights	300-00
			20	Traffic Survey	-
-	Refund from CDC		-	C.Bois Fete Stall	10-00
	re 2005 Planning Lists	20-00	-	Newsletters 2005 *	-
			1410	2006 *	-
				Display Board Items	<u>33-84</u>
					1227-66
			450	(Deficit) / Surplus	
				Over Year	<u>490-71</u>
<u>1860</u>		<u>1718-37</u>	<u>1860</u>		<u>1718-37</u>

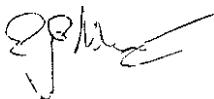
*Cost of printing donated by
member of the Association.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2006

<u>2005</u>		<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>		<u>2006</u>
£		£	£		£
819	Opening Surplus	1268-45	108	Current Account	243-32
449	Surplus / (Deficit)		1930	Deposit Account	2367-06
	on year	<u>490-71</u>	4	Cash in Hand	36
1268	Closing Surplus	1759-16	495	Debtors (2005)	90-00
	Subs. paid in			Debtors (2006)	325-00
857	advance re: 2006				-
412	2007	838-62			
	2008	<u>427-96</u>			
-					
<u>2537</u>		<u>3025-74</u>	<u>2537</u>		<u>3025-74</u>

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have audited the above accounts having regard to the matters referred to below. This Association, in common with many others of similar size and organisation, derives a substantial portion of its income from subscriptions, advertisements, etc., which cannot be fully controlled until it is entered in the accounting records and is not therefore susceptible to independent audit verification. In my opinion, subject to the foregoing, the accounts give a true and fair view of the Association's affairs as at 31st December 2006, and of the Income and Expenditure Account for the period then ended.



Ernest G Newhouse, Hon. Auditor
80, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois.



Geoff C Platts, Hon. Treasurer
12 Runrig Hill, Chesham Bois

Treasurer's Report on Accounts for 2006

The annual accounts are on the back of your agenda. I hope they are self explanatory however I will make a few comments as to how they relate to earlier years and our financial policy for future years.

Looking at the very bottom line, you will see that we had £3025.74 at the end of the year 2006 - all the debtors have now paid us – and £2537 at the end of 2005, an increase of about £500. I can also tell you that we had about £500 more at the end of 2005 than at the end of 2004. Prior to that the balance at year end had been about £2000 for several years. The increased balances for the last two

years have arisen because a member of the Association has donated the cost of printing our annual newsletter.

Your Committee feels it would like to do more to benefit the residents of Amersham, whilst ensuring that adequate funds are always available for election expenses should a suitable candidate wish to represent our Association on the Local Council. With these aims in mind, from the beginning of this year we increased our three year subscription for a couple to £6.00 and for a single person £4.00.

Environment Report for AGM 26th April 2007

Another year has gone by and I think there are few improvements in the appearance of our town. It is easy to report on things that need doing, but getting anything done is extremely difficult. The following notes give a flavour of activities on the environmental front.

The Amersham Action Group has built flowerbeds at strategic places in the town. The project was managed by ADRA member Brian Woods and we look forward to colourful displays to be planted by the Town Council. Sadly, the green surrounding the one opposite Green Lane on Woodside Road has been badly damaged by persistent parking of vehicles. We await the placing of the promised bollards. Incidentally, we are very pleased with our own Millennium flowerbed which members pruned and spread with mulch provided by the Town Council. We have ongoing professional help.

Mr Wizgier mentioned in the Bucks Examiner, Community Voice column that it is residents responsibility to cut back their vegetation to their boundary. Sadly, many residents do not do this, and in at least two cases we have encouraged the Council to write to offending residents. Many people do walk around the town including a blind man. Just one example – since last August I have been pursuing housing trusts and councils to improve the pavement between

Plantation Road and Raans Road on Woodside Road. It is used so much by parents going to St George's School; and many have a buggy as well as another child.

Parking on pavements and grass verges is still appalling, and nothing is done about it. I have even seen a person pushing a wheelchair in the road because a car was blocking the path – and it was a major thoroughfare!

Blocked road drains, in technical terms 'gully pots' are still a problem – although some were cleared earlier this year. One of our members did valuable research on this matter and presented it to the Council. Please, if anyone knows of a blocked gully pot, do report it – correspondence regarding the drains is on display.

Refuse collection appears to be running smoothly. Some residents still feel the black bins should be emptied weekly but it is reported to be government policy to see everyone has a fortnightly collection. People are pleased with the green bins, but it is quite obvious that some residents could do more recycling. We do encourage members to recycle as much as possible.

Litter is still a problem. The station is on the whole kept better, and a council employee does a very good job round the town, as far as he can with grabber, sack and brush, but he

cannot be everywhere.

Regrettably, vandalism remains a problem. The swimming pool wall facing King George V field now has graffiti on it so the leisure company has been approached to clear it. Old Town publicans are said to be firmer with their customers so we hope we do not get an increase in vandalism. A nasty incident was reported by a resident in which a youth threw a piece of wood from an alleyway in Hill Avenue, narrowly missing a child in a pushchair. The shopkeepers in Hill Avenue also say they have a lot of trouble behind their shops.

The footpaths also need attention – I have just requested the Council to spray the footpaths before the stinging nettles get any larger. The footpath from Grimsdells Lane to Woodside Road near the access to Highfield Close needs attention as puddles form right across it in wet weather and one is forced to walk in the mud. I have been told it would be an expensive job to correct – I will pursue it.

The daffodils at Oakfield Corner were again disappointing. We plan to offer to buy bulbs for a better display next year.

Our town could make more of an effort to welcome Spring, but then does anyone know where Amersham-on-the-Hill is? There is not one road sign to tell anyone where we are – Chesham and

Chesham Bois have signs up. I am told that those signs are on the Amersham Actions Group agenda. I hope we will achieve some small successes during the coming year.

Update on Environment Report October 2007

We have all been impressed with the colourful new flowerbeds and are delighted they were awarded a silver in Bloom in Britain competitions. There are still many corners in the town that could be enlivened with flowers or shrubs. It is a pity the flowerbeds by the library, planted by contractors, are not so colourful and well tended.

We are still pursuing BCC for boundary improvements on Woodside Road, between Plantation Road and Raans Road. The boundary hedge has at last been trimmed so things are slightly better.

Illegal parking continues to be a problem and nothing appears to be done about it. Considering the wet summer we had, the drains coped well, there were areas where flooding occurred.

Refuse collection appears to be running smoothly but I fear that much goes into the black bins. Residents are delighted with the green bins.

The station approach looks much better, the bins are now secured in a cage.

Litter elsewhere is still a problem. Some days the town looks appalling. George V field certainly needs clearing around the edges.

The council considers the footpath from Woodside Road to Grimsdells Lane is in good condition. In wet weather it is impossible not to get wet feet. I just hope if we get frost they will grit it before a nasty accident occurs. It is a much used path.

The stinging nettles on footpaths were very bad in September. We requested they were cleared. They did a bad job and even after a phone call it was not much better. We have heard from the town clerk that more bulbs will be planted at Oakfield Corner. We hope there will be a good display in the Spring.

Still no signs to say where Amersham-on-the-Hill is.



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Planning Report AGM 26th April 2007

Planning and the Internet

Last year, I updated members on the Internet access to planning activities. It has proved to be a love-hate relationship ... rather like Tesco's! It is beneficial to be able to see application plans, correspondence from applications and letters of objection, but there are other great frustrations. It is impossible to compare past and present plans without having to print many pages and also impossible to measure scale on home computers.

Chiltern District Council (CDC) in its wisdom, has taken the decision to embrace the system utterly, to the extent that past plans are being put into that format and paper plans destroyed. I am personally very concerned about the situation and have personal knowledge of residents wishing to compare the measurements of neighbouring extensions, now completed, with their own proposed plans, who are unable to access any copies of the past plans at all – in either format.

Development Control

There has been a notable number of the “run and run” applications which have been resolved and even the developments completed.

- The Metro flats on the Iron Horse site developed by Michael Shanley are now occupied. The landscaping in

front of the building has allowed it to fit into the street scene quite pleasingly. The permission for retail use on the ground floor which we had been unable to stop has not been activated, and the restaurant is now up and running as originally proposed.

- On the Chesham Road, the flats at No 35 and 37 are well under way, or completed.
- The redevelopment at New Chilterns, Lincoln Park is under construction. This marks the end for residents living with a dilapidated, boarded-up building.
- No 44 Woodside Close, a renovated and enlarged bungalow, has I am told at last been sold. This is a great relief to our committee member who lives next door, and was under threat of it being replaced by a block of flats at one stage.
- The extension to MacDonald Close, off Long Park is nearing completion. Residents in the locality will be pleased when the developers are finally finished as this is the third extension to the Close!
- The application for development at the rear of First Avenue was reduced and redesigned omitting the four flats and now with twelve houses. This was recently granted planning permission on appeal, having previously been refused by CDC following many letters of objection.

- Planning permission has finally been granted for redevelopment at the White House site on Chesham Road.
- Lastly, at the present time the future of the possible building plot adjacent to 16 Piggott's Orchard is not resolved.

Bury Farm Site

The Planning Update of September 2006 mentioned The Rural Housing Trust's application for 50 affordable dwellings on a high density site within the Green Belt (GB) and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at Bury Farm in Old Amersham. ADRA letter of objection was detailed and well argued. The letter impressed some of the residents of Chequers Hill who wished to be represented at the CDC Planning Committee meeting. I agreed to their request. Following discussion, the application was refused by the planning committee, although three members voted in favour, thus rejecting both their own CDC Local Plan policies and National policies regarding the GB and AONB!

CDC Initiatives

Over the past year there were two possible initiatives supported by CDC which were vigorously opposed by your Association.

- A proposal to build a YMCA Hostel on the piece of land, claimed to be owned by CDC, next to the last house at the bottom right hand side of Station

Road. ADRA submitted strong well argued objections. Councillor Mimi Harker kindly outlined to the CDC Executive. There was evidence of a lack of background investigation by CDC officers concerning such matters as the query over ownership of the land, the gas main running across the land, the public footpath and the sole access of Ruckles Field for farm machinery. In addition, there were objections on grounds of suitability of the location, residential area, parking and street scene. The proposal was taken back by CDC officers for further investigation.

- A second proposal, encouraged we understand by CDC, was consideration of redevelopment of the civic centre site – library – youth club, and Community Association Drake Hall – to provide new premises for Amersham and Wycombe College. We lobbied representatives involved in discussions and looked forward to the chance to add our views at Amersham Action Group in late January. However, it became apparent to the College and its advisers, that the site was a non-starter. They had not fully

understood the very full use made of the current buildings, some of which they had hoped to incorporate into a dual-use facility. They had also rather unrealistically, not included parking as “car use would be minimal by the anticipated date of occupation!”

To conclude, from time to time people ask, would it be all right to contact me on a planning matter. YES YES YES – share your concerns regarding your own or others applications and let’s do the best we can.

Planning Update September 2007

Since our AGM in April, new planning applications have been considered by your Committee, and objections and comments submitted. These can be inspected on the Chiltern District Council (CDC) Website. ADRA objected to the following three important redevelopment sites:

The application to demolish 130 Woodside Road and to replace it with a three storey building containing five flats and side access to a two storey terrace of three houses to the rear of the site. This application resulted in a number of objections and was refused by CDC. Two redevelopment plans at Greenways, 2 Amersham Road, Chesham Bois sought permission for

either one 3-storey building comprising 9 flats or two 3-storey buildings comprising a total of 12 flats. These two applications and the local objection to them received attention in the local press and were subsequently refused by CDC.

Redevelopment plans for another site at 128-130 Station Road, Amersham proposed 6 flats and 3 live/work units in a large building which was out of scale with its surroundings. This application has also been refused.

In June, I was requested to speak at the public meeting regarding Affordable Housing rearranged by the Rural Housing Trust. I reluctantly agreed to do so. The meeting was moderately well attended. Naturally the Trust presented the advantages for those who might qualify for rent or part ownership of an affordable property built by the Trust. The case for objectors, which I was there to present, relates to Planning Policies, both national and local, which prohibit development in the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Bury Farm site is located in the GB and AONB. As reported at the AGM your Association has objected on those grounds plus the impact on Old Amersham, the precedent that would be set and a general weakening of policies if a substantial, special case is not presented. To date, no such case has been made.

Highway Officer's Report for 2006/2007

The Chinese give each year a name, typically the Year of the Dragon or the Year of the Snake. If they lived here in Amersham, I think they may well have called the past year the Year of the Potholes. During the past year, I've made many telephone calls to 'Highways on Call' – A Bucks County Council Department, to quote them 'Working to improve local roads and pavements'. They aim to:-

- answer all telephone calls in person within 5 rings
- reply to all letters and emails within 10 days
- repair 95% of dangerous potholes within 24 hours
- complete 85% of other high priority work within 7 days
- Provide clear timescales for all other highway work

My impression is that they don't live up to their claims but of course I can only monitor what happens in the roads I use. However, I've put their contact phone number on our notice board if you wish to make a note of it.

I've heard that a claim for unsatisfactory resurfacing work in Station Road, carried out about four years ago, has been made. However in spite of several phone calls and promises, I've been unable to ascertain if such a claim was made and its outcome.

Some members of the Association believe that other areas adjacent to Amersham receive priority consideration, possibly because Amersham's representatives on the Council live outside the Amersham area. This is our reason why your Association is keen to support an independent council candidate living in our area.

Fairly recently, I attended a meeting of CATS – not animals, but the Chesham and Amersham Transport Study. This study initiated in 2003, covers Amersham, Chesham and Little Chalfont, but apparently due to lack of funds and resources, was unable to progress to a comprehensive review of the issues raised. However now that funds have become available Jacobs Consultancy – who ever they are – have been commissioned to assess the area and consider implications of transport information gathered over the past four years.

My attendance at this meeting was subsequent to your committee answering and commenting upon a questionnaire initiated by CATS. Problems due to school traffic had been identified on the Chesham Road near the Beacon and Our Lady's Convent School and consideration is being given to make Chiltern Road and Clifton Road one way and restrict parking near the ends of these roads. Problems were also noted in Stanley Hill near the Amersham Road. I said there were also problems in Bois Lane at

Chesham Bois C. of E. School, in Copperkins Lane and Heatherton House School and the School in Mitchel Walk. These schools were to be asked to develop School Travel Plans – whatever this means.

Consideration is also being given to provide traffic lights at the junction of the A4150 (Woodside Road) and the A404 at BlackHorse Bridge, also at the roundabout at the bottom of Gore Hill. The double mini roundabouts of Oakfield Corner were said to cause problems, but it was not clear if anything specific was proposed. However consideration to making Sycamore Road through the town one way were under review.

Parking in Amersham continues to be a problem in both Amersham-on-the-Hill and the Old Town. We have lobbied hard for proper parking spaces to be made on the verge of the road past the hospital, but now any parking has been prevented by earth bunds, the reason given being fear of damage to services running under this land. This is surprising as, so far as I am aware, cars have been parking on this verge for years without causing any damage to the services, though they have churned up the verge. I would have thought that covering the verge with perforated galvanised sheeting, as I've seen used elsewhere, would have been a satisfactory solution and easy to remove if there ever was a problem with the services. The free parking spaces in this road have now been converted to 16 metered spaces

– I believe with a maximum time of 3 hours.

There is some evidence that much of the parking space in the Old Town is being taken up with all day parking. This of course deters people visiting the Old Town to do shopping and it may be one of the factors influencing shop owners, as it is believed six well established shops are up for sale. It has been suggested by some people that the Dovecote car park should be made into a dual level car park.

Bridal Ways

An organisation calling itself the Trail Riders Fellowship is attempting to have a number of public bridleways upgraded to the status of Byways open to all traffic. This effectively means Byways which for years have been used by walkers, and to a lesser extent by horse riders, will be open to 4-wheel drive vehicles, quad bikes, motor cycles and other traffic likely to damage the side vegetation, cause rutted and muddy surfaces in wet weather and of course noise disturbance.

We have already voiced our concerns to Bucks County Council in particular concerning Tropps Lane and Bottom Lane in Chesham and the Council rejected these proposals. However the Trail Riders Fellowship appealed to the Secretary of State and it seems there is to be a public enquiry. We shall oppose any changes from the current traditional use of these bridal ways.

Aircraft Noise

We understand there are plans to re-route flight paths over the Chiltern area with a consultation period towards the end of the year. We intend to provide an input to these consultations. It is difficult to be certain of the effectiveness of any inputs we may make, but in the early 70s when flight paths were last re-arranged, the finally announced flight paths were somewhat further to the North West thus largely avoiding Amersham, than those originally planned.

Interestingly the 'Powers that be' argued that taking the noise away from 10,000 people and subjecting a different 10,000 to aircraft noise maintained the status quo – having chosen to live in a quiet area didn't count for anything.

Finally, we have asked the bus company which runs the service between Oxford to Cambridge via Stansted to reinstate the stops in Old Amersham and Amersham-on-the-Hill, but so far have only had an acknowledgement of our letter.

Membership AGM 2007

Our present membership is 1,485. First of all thank you to those who deliver Newsletters and collect subscriptions. We always need more volunteers. If you can help please contact Rosemary Dean. We particularly need volunteers in the following areas to collect subscriptions.

1. Amersham
Road / Manor
Drive / Great Bois
Wood
2. Orchard Lane
3. Old Town
4. South Road
5. Station Road
6. Sycamore Road

Even if you cannot help in this way, how about asking a couple of neighbours or friends to join the Association – it seems that many in Amersham still don't know we exist. If every member finds one more, we'll double our size!

Chairman's Report

Good evening and welcome to the 45th annual action of the ADRA. It's nice to see you and thank you for coming out tonight. If I can start with your committee, I can report that change which is usually but not always good has been minimal. Mr Alan Smith has agreed to be co-opted last summer. The "not always good" change involves Mr Kevin Dyer who for many years has served us well but has decided to retire in the autumn.

As you have heard from the Committee reports, we have had a busy year. Our objective as an organisation continues unchanged; that is to encourage action which improves the quality of life in our communities, and to establish effective communication between residents and our local councils and other agencies. Although these have remained constant, the ways to achieve them have, not surprisingly, changed over time in response to new central Government initiatives and structures of local organisations, and changing priorities and funding availability within the various organisations.

One issue we have become involved in has been Chiltern Railways proposal to alter its timetable at the expense of local commuters, and as Bridget mentioned, the most recent forays often supported by the authorities to build inappropriately in the green belt.

We have had successes in the day to day matters of expediting pothole repairs (Black Horse Bridge, Holloway Lane) and in getting some action on overgrown footpaths. Our normal methods of attack are letters, phone calls and visits to those we think can and should do something. Ann Terry has been mentioned in dispatches, and praised by a council employee for her diligence and perseverance.

We respond to your concerns as you raise them with us, but often achieve best results working to support you rather than initiate on your behalf. We also continue to take a "bigger picture" approach and are represented on bodies like the Amersham Action Group and input to initiatives like the Chiltern Open Space and Recreational Strategy and the Chiltern Community Plan.

We have had much discussion about member communication recently. The main considerations being cost and effectiveness of what we do. The Newsletter is an annual publication due to distribution challenges and cost. We'd like to increase frequency of communication but how? On the notification for this meeting, I asked if you'd like to receive E-mail communication from us. The reason for this is quite straightforward, although we are not currently able to do it. Some people are increasingly moving in that direction and have come to be comfortable with it. Indeed to them the benefits are many, and a point of preference. I

realise that not everyone is so inclined and won't lose sight of that.

The positive response so far has been approximately 30, along with some requests to form a website with regular updates. An interesting suggestion, but set-up and maintenance requires commitment. I will be exploring this and would ask you again for your comments.

As I said, our objective is to increase membership communication. We want more input from you and increased participation in general, not only when there's a problem.

We have made contributions for the past two years to the Christmas lights in Amersham, co-ordinated by the Amersham Action Group. It's good for the town and we feel it's worthwhile for us. We've also been asked to contribute to the hanging baskets in town. Here again they are an amenity we all enjoy. They add to the good appearance and therefore development, and as we're in a position to afford it, we're planning to support this appeal as well.

The January social took place on the 17th, and was enjoyed by all those present. We plan to continue this event next year and work to increase the turn out. It provides another enjoyable event for contact with the membership. We've also discussed holding the October committee

meeting as an open forum. I would appreciate your views on this.

I'll close with two things. First, my annual appeal for your support. We're a volunteer organisation, dedicated to our community. We'd be very pleased if you could give us a little of your time. Without an active membership we can't function. Committee meetings are 3rd Wednesday of every month, except August, 8:15 in the Small Barn Hall.

Finally my thanks and I'm sure yours, to our committee who keep the ADRA going. I say thank you again to Kevin for all he's done. I'll now turn the floor over to Mr Tony Glyn-Jones, our speaker this evening who'll share with us his considerable experience in gaining satisfaction from service and sharing.

An open forum will follow.

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Scouting

As you will see from this picture of the flowerbed at the bottom of Station Road Scouting is 100 years old this year. This is an opportunity for us to demonstrate the unique value of Scouting to the world and to celebrate achievements but 2007 is the dawn of a new century of Scouting and we should look to see what improvements can be made to meet the needs of even more young people, their families and communities and offer better and bigger Scouting worldwide.

Today Scouting is a million times bigger than when it was first started by Robert Baden Powell in 1907 on Brownsea Island.

It now involves girls and boys, men and women from every race, culture and religion and from nearly every country in the world. Hundreds of young people, having experienced scouting to the full are now contributing to society as confident resourceful and selfless adults.

Personal development means promoting the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being of the individual, helping each one to achieve their full potential. Scouts are known not only for their love of the outdoors and good humour but for their sense of responsibility towards themselves, the world and others. It is their willingness to help, enthusiasm and appetite for life that marks them out. Activities include camping, sailing, canoeing, hiking, climbing as well.





Our fun, flexible programme helps young people develop team skills, leadership qualities and lasting friendships. We believe in supporting tomorrow's leaders today.

After the First World War when many Scouts were killed, the first international Jamboree was held in 1920 at London's Olympia for 8000 Scouts from 34 countries.

The 21st World Scout Jamboree was held this year marking the Centenary of Scouting with over 40,000 Scouts attending from almost every country in the world.

There are many reasons why adults choose to volunteer for Scouting. Here are some that existing volunteers have given:

- To give something back to the community
- To support the leaders
- Because volunteering is a 'good thing'
- To spend more quality time with your child
- To develop your own skills
- To enjoy and rediscover adventure for yourself

Scouting is successful in the Amersham area but more leaders, helpers, fundraisers and administrators are always needed.

Contact a Scout Group near you or look at www.scouts.org.uk if you want to know more.

2nd Amersham Common (St Johns Church Hall, Woodside Road 01494 725973)

1st Amersham Common (HQ rear of St George's Church, White Lion Road)

2nd Amersham on the Hill (Jubilee Hall, Rectory Hill 01494 725515)

1st Chesham Bois (Pioneer Hall, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois 01494 433395)



LabAid Would Appreciate Help

Here's an opportunity for anyone in Amersham to make a significant personal impact on a charity supporting children's education in developing countries.

Many schools, mainly in Africa, have a science laboratory and teach chemistry, physics and biology, but cannot get funding to buy equipment. The number of schools wanting equipment is never-ending. Many schools have nothing at all but their students are still required to do practical work as part of their exams, which may entail them travelling some distance to another school, to be confronted by apparatus they have never handled before.

LabAid set up in Amersham about 20 years ago to fill this gap and registered as a charity in 1997. Equipment is donated by schools in the UK. Since there have been significant changes in curriculum over the years, the amount of surplus apparatus to be thrown out, but in reasonable condition, has increased. LabAid collect it, checks it over and stores is ready for a suitable recipient. In a typical year, LabAid ships out about 4 or 5 tons of equipment. It goes to some 50 schools or colleges in a dozen different countries.

Operating out of the wooden hut behind Amersham Free Church, LabAid has very limited storage and operating space. All the administration and some apparatus checking is done from people's homes.

Members of ADRA could help. Can you offer us any empty room, garage, garden shed or even a cupboard for temporary storage? This would, for example, ease the pressure caused by most schools wanting to give us equipment just before the summer holidays.

LabAid runs a minimal cost operation – all those involved are unpaid: transport from schools to Amersham is by volunteers or via the nation network of The Entertainer toyshops; shipping overseas through other charities or individuals connected with the local school. All shipping materials are recycled packaging.

How can you help?

- Offer us an empty room, cupboard, garage of hut for temporary storage.
- Collect equipment from schools and bring it to Amersham.
- Let us know of any school or college that is to close of will dispose of old equipment.
- If you are approaching retirement (or already work

part-time), spare an afternoon per week – cleaning, checking, testing, counting, sorting (e.g. CROs, power packs, meters, balances and clocks).

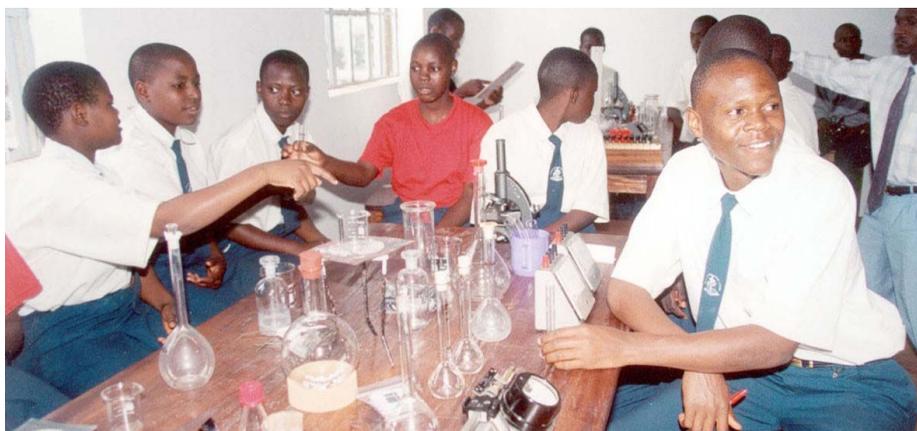
- Set up a satellite workshop for the checking and/or repair of apparatus.

Contact details

See the LabAid website www.labaid.org, or email labaidtrust@labaid.org, or call Alan Welch, phone/fax 01494 726861.



Above: Limited storage space



Above: A class enjoying the new equipment

Exciting Medieval find at Chesham Bois House

Julia Plaistowe, the owner of Chesham Bois House, is a keen gardener. Over the years, she's turned up 17th century and medieval tiles beneath the greenhouse, uncovered medieval pottery in the flowerbeds, and noticed strange 'lumps and bumps' at the bottom of the garden.

In 2004, Julia Plaistowe invited the local archaeology group to investigate the garden surrounding her home. Since then, there has been much interest in the history around Chesham Bois House and its previous inhabitants. Channel 4 representatives went to visit the medieval site at Chesham Bois.

Several archaeological finds have attracted interest from a wide range of sources and the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society carried out a series of digs and a small scale excavation with interesting findings.

A thousand years ago Chesham Bois House was part of a Saxon estate, belonging to a brother of King Harold, killed with him at the battle of Hastings. William the Conqueror probably gave this "royal" land to his half brother, Odo – bishop of Bayeux. By 1213 the de Bois family had arrived and in 1433 Thomas Cheyne bought the manor. The Duke of Bedford bought the estate in 1735.

Some of the more memorable archaeological discoveries to date

include:

- A large hearth, which with supporting evidence looks to have been an early 17th-century bakehouse. This was discovered in a trench which had layers of brick, burnt bricks, and many layers of floors which turned out to be the oven with five compartments for baking bread.
- An iron key that perhaps would have opened the front door of the manor house itself.
- The 'lumps and bumps' revealed to include several rectangular features that it is thought might indicate the presence of a deserted medieval village. It is believed that the original building was approximately five times the size of the house today. In the Domesday Book of 1087, mention was made of a Saxon estate near Chesham so it's possible that this was Chesham Bois.

Further surprising finds were made during late summer excavations. Another metre was excavated westwards revealing the hearth only extended a few more inches and had been cut into by a small red brick rectangular structure of a later date

and which may have been external to a later building. There is clear evidence of a late medieval occupation. This comes from pottery fragment dating to 13th-15th C and fragments of medieval marble mortar and roofing tiles.

As all the newly excavated areas were cleared, three floor layers emerged to the west beyond the brick structure and under the unexcavated balk. Each floor was made up of two layers: an under floor support and a top layer of mortar. In one case the under-floor was made up of a couple of inches of fine coastal sand – rather intriguing, considering we are far from the sea.

The sand showed clear evidence of burning while in situ, changing from a pale creamy yellow to orangey-red. The Chess Valley archaeologists were excited because so many different features were found in a comparatively small area.

The English Heritage scientific advisor for S.E. England who came to view the excavations, was most interested in what she saw and recommended that a grant application was made so all the finds could be dated. No doubt the findings will be shared and will enable us to have an even better understanding about the hidden secrets of Chesham Bois House and life there before we knew it.



Above: Chesham Bois House

Amersham Free Church Centenary Year

You cannot be an Amersham resident without having heard or read something about the various ways in which Amersham Free Church is celebrating its centenary year. The support from the local community has been heart warming in helping the church to reach its target of £50,000 to provide clean water for a number of schools and village communities in Uganda – but more of that later.

The building now known as Amersham Free Church on the corner of Woodside Road and Sycamore Road is clearly not a hundred years old, but the worshipping community first met in February 1907 at the invitation of Alfred Ellis, a solicitor who had moved from London and was concerned that the local community which had grown around the station had no place in which to gather for Christian worship close to home. They met in the Bijou Hall which, in the early days was quite big enough to accommodate all those who regularly attended but by 1909, the number had grown from 23 at the outset to 190 and it was agreed that larger premises were needed. (The Bijou Hall now forms part of the Pretty and Ellis auction rooms).

Following a series of transactions in January 1911 a plot of land fronting Sycamore Road was purchased and plans were drawn up for a new church building. This was formally opened in August 1911 but by 1914

was felt to be too small to accommodate the growing congregation and in August 1916 the extension of the building, which could accommodate 300 people, was completed. However, by 1920 it was felt that even larger premises were needed and in 1921 a piece of land was bought on the corner of Woodside Road and Sycamore Road for the sum of £2000. Finally in 1962, after a good deal of movement to accommodate the changing needs of the congregation, the present building was opened.

Throughout its history Amersham Free Church has been as much concerned with the needs of others as with its own domestic issues and this philosophy has continued to the present time. When considering how its centenary should be celebrated, it was agreed that the church should have a project which would enable some need to be met somewhere in the world that would allow the church to share its celebration of 100 years of worship with others, and this is how Water 4 Africa was born.

Water 4 Africa is seeking to raise £50,000 to deliver safe water and proper sanitation to around 10,000 people in the central region of Uganda. The project will be carried out by WaterAid, a charity set up by local Amersham man David Kinnersley in 1981.

Thanks to our Victorian ancestors, piped water and proper sanitation have been available in Buckinghamshire and throughout the UK for more than 100 years. It was their joint introduction that helped pave the way for the huge increase in life expectancy from 50 years in 1880 to 65 years in 1920. However, today, 1.1bn people in the world still have no access to safe water and a staggering 2.6bn lack proper loos. As a result, 5,000 children die everyday from easily preventable water-related diseases. In Africa it is said that the most effective vaccine you can give a child against death is a glass of clean water.

Water 4 Africa then is seeking to play a small part in helping to reduce these horrendous figures. To raise the £50,000 needed Water 4 Africa has organised various events including a fashion show, concert, river of gold and a sponsored water trek / picnic to Latimer.

At the same time many members of the congregation have taken individual action. The net result is that by the end of July the appeal has raised over £32,000. Future events include an Auction of Promises in September, an Antiques Valuation Evening in October and a concert by the Chess Valley Male Voice Choir in November.

By raising £50,000 to bring clean water, safe sanitation and better hygiene to 10,000 people in Uganda Water 4 Africa will help change their lives for ever. For along with these vital necessities should come four other benefits:-
Improved health, more time for kids to go to school, a chance to grow better crops and the opportunity to gain more resources. Hence Water 4 Africa. What a well good idea!



ADRA Committee Members

January 2007

Chairman	Bron Curley, Hyrons Lodge, 129 Woodside Road, Amersham HP6 6AW ☎724988 : (m) 07740 025313 email: broncurley@aol.com
Vice Chairman	Alan Smith, Bramley Cottage, Copperkins Lane, Amersham, HP6 5RA ☎727978 : (m) 07775 927181 email: alan.smith71@virgin.net
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Pauline West	52 Copperkins Lane, Chesham Bois HP6 5QR ☎727166 email: pauline891@aol.com

Calendar of Events October 2006 – September 2007

Date	Function	Committee Member attending
01/11/06	Amersham Society AGM	Kevin Dyer
02/11/06	SPA Meeting	Kevin Dyer
04/11/06	Rural Housing Exhibition	Kevin Dyer
27/11/06	Amersham Society Meeting	Kevin Dyer
28/11/06	SPA Meeting at CDC	Kevin Dyer
30/11/06	Amersham & District Community Association	Bridget Woods
01/12/06	Amersham Action Group	Christine Summers Bridget Woods
09/01/07	Rural Housing Trust / Amersham Society / ADRA Meeting	Kevin Dyer Bridget Woods
11/01/07	Amersham Visitor Strategy Steering Group	Alan Smith
17/01/07	ADRA Social	Rosemary Dean, Kevin Dyer, Geoff Platts, Shirley Sherlock Alan Smith, Christine Summers Ann Terry, Pauline West Bridget Woods
25/01/07	Amersham Action Group	Christine Summers Bridget Woods
13/02/07	Amersham Society Meeting	Kevin Dyer
14/02/07	SPA Meeting at CDC	Kevin Dyer
22/02/07	Community Association Meeting	Bridget Woods
14/03/07	Chesham & Amersham Traffic Study	Geoff Platts
26/03/07	Amersham Society Meeting	Kevin Dyer
31/03/07	Mayor's Charity Concert	Christine Summers
10/05/07	Amersham Action Group Meeting	Bridget Woods Christine Summers
11/06/07	Amersham Society Meeting	Kevin Dyer
14/06/07	Extraordinary ADRA Meeting to prepare response to Amersham Town Market Health Check	Bron Curley, Rosemary Dean, Kevin Dyer, Geoff Platts, Alan Smith, Christine Summers, Ann Terry, Bridget Woods
02/07/07	Old Amersham Policing Team	Kevin Dyer
05/07/07	Parking Meeting	Kevin Dyer
05/07/07	Amersham Neighbourhood Policing Scheme	Christine Summers
12/07/07	Amersham Action Group	Ian Smith, Christine Summers
06/09/07	Amersham Action Group Meeting	Alan Smith, Bridget Woods

AMERSHAM
and district
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION



Amersham & District Residents Association was formed in 1960. The committee meets monthly to discuss and act upon a variety of local issues, including Planning, Environmental and Traffic matters, whilst working within the framework of the Association's aims which are:

To encourage action which improves the quality of life in Amersham, Chesham Bois and the surrounding areas;

To establish effective communication between residents and the Local Councils and other agencies;

To maintain an active, non party-political stance in local affairs, in order to represent all residents;

To nominate candidates for local elections and to support them fully.

The Association's Newsletter is published in the Autumn each year and the AGM, which is usually lively and well-attended, is held in the Spring.

Join today. The greater our numbers (currently approximately 1500), the great will be our standing in local affairs. A list of current committee members can be found in Amersham library. If you are concerned about any local matter, please contact one of the committee members and we will do our best to help.

If you think you might be interested in joining the committee, we would be delighted to welcome you as a guest to one of more of our meetings before you commit yourself. Committee meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of the month. Further details from any committee member.

Please send the application form to:

Hon Records Officer, Mrs Rosemary Dean

41 St Leonards Road, Chesham Bois, Amersham, HP6 6DS Tel: 01494 726517

I/We wish to join the Amersham & District Residents Association

The subscription fee for three years is £6 per household with a discount of £2 where there is only one adult in the household. I / We enclose £.....

Names(s).....

Address

I / We agree to the records of our membership being kept in computerised form.

Signed.....

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