Chorlton Voice: Bulletin March 2021

STOP Press: Please look out for requests to sign a letter to the Coop re the local support for the CLT's bid – coming soon

Welcome message

Welcome to this Spring Bulletin. It was meant to be a February Bulletin but February came and went too quickly. This distortion of time is one of the weirdest things about the last year. There used to be a belief that if you were busy, time went quickly. Do you remember Dunbar in Joseph Heller's Catch 22 who thought that if he sat around doing nothing all day, cultivating boredom, in order to prolong his life? Well, I have not been as busy as usual, and time has been flying. March 21st is census day (see below). I have grown to be fond of the Census. During lockdowns, like many, I have been researching the comings and goings of my ancestors and census forms have been invaluable, especially if the handwritten versions are available.

In Gaelic-speaking Scotland, during the nineteenth century, enumerators' entries often had to be taken with a pinch of salt as they just wrote what they heard, sometime resulting in quite amusing entries. Let's hope this year's census will be a little more accurate than some I have been looking at. The exciting thing about a census year is that this usually signals the release of information from 100 years before – so we can look forward to the 1921 census becoming available online in January 2022.

But dwelling on the past is one thing: it is quite another to move onto the present and future. With the vaccination roll-out going so well in South Manchester (thanks to everyone involved!) with a bit of luck time will begin to slow down again by the summer. In the meantime, blossom trees will soon be sprouting, replacing the catkins for a glimmer of joy in the sunshine.

Carolyn, Chair, Chorlton Voice

Annual reports

We notified members inthe last Bulletin that we would not be holding an AGM this year. So we will not be retiring Committee Members on a rotational basis as we usually do. Instead, we are pleased to say that the current Committee Members have agreed to continue for another year. You will see there are some vacancies, so we welcome interest in filling these – contact chair@chorltonvoice.org if you are interested in being co-opted this year. We will return to elected Committee members next March.

Committee:

Chair Carolyn Kagan
Secretary Vacancy
Treasurer Barry Whitmarsh
Committee members:
Hazel Gibb (Newsletter editor)
Peter Topping (Arts Festival Director)
Lindy Newns
Cath Brownhill
Mary McGovern
2 vacancies

Chair's report 2020-21

Chorlton Voice, like every other community group, has been defined by the Pandemic this year. Nevertheless, we continue to play our part ininfluencing developments in Chorlton, always with a commitment to involve and engage residents.

Communications

At our last meeting, our AGM of 2019-2020, we could see the writing on the wall – and, as predicted, the first national lockdown of the Pandemic closely followed. There were no face to face meetings during the year. We immediately made sure that our membership list was up to date and that we had details of email addresses where available. Committee members contacted all those members who did not have an email address to ensure

thaey were in contact with family, friends and neighbours and, where relevant, maintained contact with them throughout the year.

At this AGM we explored signage and sitting places in Chorlton – the minutes of this meeting were forwarded to the Neighbourhood Team, who were immediately deployed into COVID support, so no progress was made on the proposals.

We did not produce bi-monthly Newsletters as normal – instead issuing 11 Bulletins for these abnormal times, in order to get information and updates of Committee activities to members more quickly. In between times, we communicated by email on matters that required urgent attention. Thanks to Mary McGovern for her work on this and for maintaining the membership database.

Committee meetings and Planning

The committee has met monthly, sometimes more frequently (20 meetings over the year), to consider local issues and planning applications, and thanks to Barry Whitmarshwhocollates the applications, communicates with members at meetings over planning issues and liaises with the planning department at the Council. We have continued to challenge developments being made with no prior permission and those that are out of scale or character with the area – not always with success. We were most disappointed to see that the Planning Inspectorate upheld the appeal against our, and MMC's objections to an illuminated, moving advertising board on a gable end above Ryan and Baker's office, opposite Tutku.

Money

Barry is also the Treasurer and has kept careful records of income and expenditure (see Treasurer's report, below), including the accounts for the Arts Festival which has been kept separate and overseen by Mary McGovern.

Monthly Meeting, Trips and Social events

There were no monthly meetings, trips or social events this year, due to the pandemic. In the autumn we surveyed members to see if there was any appetite for on-line meetings, and there was not.

Networking

As we reported last year, we have developed links with other Civic Societies. We have collaborated and shared responses to the Government's consultations on changes to the Planning system – this cooperation is a new development. We have not been able to meet face to face.

We have continued to take a lead in stimulating interest in local developments. We coordinate the Chorlton Alliance, a unique coalition of groups and other people interested in 'place making'.

The Alliance established a series of online meetings, open to anyone, called Reimagining Our Chorlton, which has spawned a number of projects to ensure we 'build back better' in Chorlton (see https://chorlton.coop/)

Also, via the Alliance, we played a major part in developing and shaping the Our Streets Chorlton climate action project (http://www.ourstreetschorlton.co.uk/) , which secured over £200,000 form the Lottery.

The Precinct development is still in the pipeline and in February we took part in a conversation with the owners (Great Manchester Pension fund) and the managers (Avison Young) of the precinct, along with Chorlton Land Trust, to make sure that those moving the developments forward still had in mind the community interest and our concern to be involved in the development.

Other groups we contribute to include the ward-based Health development partnerships; the Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group; Chorlton Connected; Chorlton Connectors (the street mutual aid coordinators); the ward based Climate Action Groups; the Picture House Project - The Stayin' Alive campaign (Thanks to Hazel Gibb for doing so much on this project).

We have responded to Government and MCC consultations on pavement parking, planning reform, bus reform, and use of pesticides. We did not respond the latest Cycleway consultation as we know there is a huge diversity of opinion within the membership about this.

We sent a message of condolence and appreciation ot the Neighbourhood team on the sad news that NahlaEljack had died from COVID-19.

All Things Arty

We organised the 2020 Arts festival. Just as we were in the process of preparing the programme, lockdown came, so we reluctantly cancelled it. However, in June, a local resident, Jess Symons of Vision Lab, contacted us with a view to mounting a virtual Festival , on an experimental basis. This went ahead at the beginning of October and was a a great success – for those who managed to access it!. The festival report can be found at https://chorltonartsfestival.org/archive/review-of-the-2020-virtual-chorlton-arts-festival/ .. Two of the exciting things about that festival were (i) the creation of a virtual festival field, Solstice, which is still available for online events; and (ii) the creation of the virtual streets of Chorlton, which we hope will be used beyond the Festival to promote Chorlton. We are in the beginning stages of organising the 2021 festival (11 – 19 September), which will be a mix of outdoor, indoor (if permitted) and virtual experiences. We are pleased to welcome Amy Telfer and NakibNarat to the Arts Festival Committee, which has reported regularly to CV Committee meetings. We hold the finances for the Arts Festival, and these are carefully accounted for within the Chorlton Voice financial management.

Under the aegis of Chorlton Arts, we have worked with Southway Housing Trust place art boards on the hoardings of some building being undertaken on Barlow Moor Road, right behind Leon's, opposite the park. We hope this will be the first of many art installations in public space. Thanks to Peter Topping for the hard work securing this installation.

In December we judged the Christmas window competition and awarded cups to Tiny's Tipple (the Chorlton Cup); and The Curious Fox (The Mary Paul Cup).

Natural Environment

Chorlton Voice has continued to support members wishing to stop the use of pesticides ontheir streets and to promote street tree planting. If you are interested in doing either of these things on your street, contact one of the local Councillors. Member Jenny Slee organised, with the backing of the Society, a mechanism through which residents can request a cessation of weed killing on their streets. She is also promoting the growth in the number of trees being planted in streets, again supported by the Society. These projects

help pollinators and contribute to the climate action plans under development in both Chorlton and Chorlton Park wards.

Conclusion

As you can see, Chorlton Voice has kept its fingers in lots of pies and is taking the lead on many issues. There are some active members of Chorlton Voice, but most of the activity is being undertaken by Committee members and there is still a danger we become too stretched. We have vacancies for more committee members. Our priorities are as last year.

We have to be realistic as to what we can achieve with limited human and other resources – it would be great to have a full Committee as we move forward to try to:

- Involve more people in the work of Chorlton Voice
- Hold some events about the proposed development of the Precinct and the Picture House
- Develop our links with schools
- Develop our social media presence
- Create a welcome pack for people new to Chorlton
- Continue to work with others to keep Chorlton a great place to live, work and play.

So, if you would like to join the friendly and supportive committee, please do get in touch – chair@chorltonvoice.org . carolynKagan, February 2021

Treasurer's Report

For some strange reason, there has been little activity on our account this last year. Our spend has been limited to our subscription to Chorlton Traders and our public liability insurance, totalling £125.80.

We received a windfall of £1,284.67 when the Friends of Hough End Hall wound down and transferred their balance to us. But our regular income was limited to the collection of £17.00 donated at last March's AGM.

This leaves us with a healthy balance of £ £1,992.42. We are also holding funds for Chorlton Arts and Chorlton Connected.

Barry Whitmarsh, February 2021

end of annual reports

Planning news

The committee has continued to meet to discuss planning issues.

Retrospective permission has been granted for the new canopy erected at the new restaurant at 478 Wilbraham Road (formerly Cask and Kiln bar).

Permission was refused for the external covered waiting area at 461 Barlow Moor Road.

There is a current application to use the former tanning salon at 422 Barlow Moor Road as a Hot Food Takeaway. The Committee has lodged an objection on the grounds that there is already a concentration of cafes, restaurants and takeaways in this block and the addition of another will detract from the character of the area and exacerbate the problem of fumes to residents of Needham Avenue.

The Committee has also lodged an objection to a proposed 2-storey building to provide 4 flats at a cleared site at 56 Mersey Bank Avenue. Although the redevelopment of the vacant site is welcome in principle, concerns were raised over the design.

Work has started on an extension to Hough End Hall, our Grade 2* listed Tudor Manor House, without applications for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent having been submitted. The Council has issued a Temporary Stop Notice which requires the cessation of all activity relating to the construction of the two storey rear extension for a period of 28 days. Any breach of the notice will be a criminal offence.

Census day, 21st March

This year, the census will be mainly online. Each household will get, by post, their invitation to take part. This will have an access code to allow you to fill in



your household's census return online(external link opens in a new window / tab).

If you haven't received a pack (letter and access code) by Wednesday 10 March, then you should either go online(external link opens in a new window / tab) or call the census contact centre on 0800 328 2021 to order your census pack. You don't have to wait until 21 March, you can fill it in once you get the pack.

The census form is very easy to complete, taking less than 20 minutes.

Paper forms and help

While you are encouraged to complete your census return online, paper forms are still available if you need one.

A paper form can be ordered by calling 0800 328 2021.

Census teams will be available to advise anyone who needs additional support to fill in the census.

Our Streets Chorlton Climate Action Project is going from strength to strength. There are lots of ways to get involved. If you fancy yourself as a citizen data collector, helping to collect information about traffic, then the project will welcome you – all support given. There are some workshops coming up – choose your date and book at https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/our-streets-chorlton-32602961289

There are other opportunities for involvement coming up and the launch of the website will be any day now. Contact George.coombs@groundwork.org.uk or Pauline.johnson@walkridegm.org.uk

Building a Healthy Future: Brilliant evidence based course for people with long-term physical conditions

The next Building a Healthy Future course will take place LIVE on zoom from mid -April, Wednesdays 1 – 3pm. Poster with dates and links to sign up attached. Places do tend to get booked up but I always keep a waiting list as there are inevitably drop outs before the course starts or people who change their mind.

Building a Healthy Future course for people with long-term physical conditions

Living with a long-term condition isn't plain sailing and we don't always get the support we need when things get tough. This course is for anyone living with a long-term physical condition and who wants to find ways of managing and improving their psychological wellbeing. The course aims to help lift mood and will teach a range of tools and technique to manage stress and life's challenges. The course takes place live on Zoom over 6 sessions of two hours each.

The next course starts on Wednesday 21 April 1-3pm. I am very happy to offer participants a Zoom one-to-one to help them get used to the video platform. I do call everyone who is referred or who self-registers to give them more details about the course and ensure that they are interested before confirming their place.

More details on the website and attached (BAHF):

https://www.manchestermind.org/events/building-a-healthy-future-long-term-conditions/

e ruth.rosselson@manchestermind.org

w **manchestermind.org**

As this Bulletin has now grown to be nine pages long, I will end here. But look out for a new Bulletin sometime soon. Carolyn Kagan, chair@chorltonvoice.org