Chorlton Voice Bulletin February/March 2022

Introduction

It doesn't really seem that long ago that we held our last AGM – but it was a full two years ago , one incomplete pandemic ago , and two Arts Festivals ago. During this time we have re-found the power of community to sustain our lives whilst struggling to cope with surviving the pandemic. Many of us will have lost family members to the pandemic and may be coping with the fall out of both bereavements and infections. We have learnt that our wellbeing is not limited to physical wellbeing, which has reminded me of what have widely become known as the 5-ways to wellbeing. These are: *Take notice* (of things around you, here and now); *Connect* (feeling close to and valued by other people, talking to others when you can);*Learn* (keep learning new things to feel good and meet with others); be active); *Be active* (with regular physical and mental activity at whatever pace you can); *Give* (of time and energy, participating in community life).



https://www.cpslmind.org.uk/resource/five-ways-to-wellbeing/

Central to all of the 5-ways are other people, not just thinking of 'I' but trying to see things in terms of 'we'. This is what COVID-measures at their best did and what the support we have given each other throughout the pandemic has reflected. Chorlton Voice is very much about the 'we' and I hope we can sustain this perspective as we move forward.

In this Bulletin we draw attention to some local activities of interest but also include papers for the AGM to take place on March 8th. We would really welcome new Committee members to support some of the activities – you will see from the Chair's Report that there are several exciting projects with which to get involved.

I hope to see you at the AGM

Carolyn chair@chorltonvoice.org

Planning News

Recent planning applications include:

- Revised proposals for development at Hough End Leisure Centre And Playing Fields. The proposals are scaled back from the first application and include a two-storey extension to form changing rooms, cafe facilities, flexible club/social/training rooms and an extension to the existing gym space following the demolition of the existing changing block building, creation of two 3G artificial football turf pitches, associated floodlighting and fencing; a 67 space car park and an additional 60 space overflow car park. The committee could not reach consensus regarding this application and so did not submit any representations.
- Proposals for development of the car park of Chorlton Irish Club on Cross Road. The final proposals are for 29 apartments in a three and four storey building. We objected to the proposals because we considered that the scale and massing of the building were excessive for the location.
- Proposals for a prefabricated building to provide childcare facilities in the grounds of Chorlton Sports And Social Club Hardy Lane. These are to accommodate the COSH organisation who are currently located in the grounds of a local school.
- A retrospective application for the siting on an InPost Parcel Locker at 318 Barlow Moor Road was submitted, but has been withdrawn in the face of highway objections.
- A previous application to change the use of 276 Barlow Moor Road from a shop to a hot food takeaway has been amended to a proposal for a restaurant.

'Grey on Green' project

'Grey on Green' project is being launched by Manchester Museum and Southway Housing Trust.

New 'Grey on Green' project champions older people shaping a sustainable future. It will highlight the contributions older people make to a sustainable world. The project will be led by older people who will share their wisdom for a sustainable lifestyle and discuss their experience and observations of the climate and ecological emergency. The aim is also to change the common misconception that older people care less about the environment than younger people. A number of events and activities will take place during this year-long project resulting in a Grey on Green guidebook filled with advice and tips.

If you, or someone that you know, are 50 + and interested, please contact:
Email j.dean@southwayhousing.co.uk (phone 07860 758 346) or
maria.ramosacevedo@manchester.ac.uk (phone 07818 578 474)

HOME

January to March 2022

If you are up and ready to visit the City centre, see this exhibition at HOME.

HOME, 2 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN

The first Manchester Open, in 2020 – the most successful exhibition in HOME's history – saw over 33,000 visitors enjoying 543 artworks by 451 artists. It was the first region-wide exhibition of its type to welcome entries from people of any background and level of experience, including established professionals, new and emerging talent, enthusiastic amateurs and first-time artists. From January to March 2022, the HOME Gallery walls will be filled with work from 400+ Greater Manchester residents, selected by a panel consisting of art experts and community representatives.

Visit Home Manchester Website

Digital Connection

One thing the pandemic revealed was just how much more easy it was to get information through digital connections. If you, or someone you know, are not digitally connected, this might be of interest to you.

Support to get online or be digitally connected

Helping everyone get connected

Manchester's Digital Inclusion Team are here to help everyone get online.

If you, a family member, or a friend would like to know more about getting online, just text **07860 064128** or email with your name and the area of Manchester you live in. The Digital Inclusion Team will take it from there with some free and friendly support to help them get online.

If you want to find out more go to let's get digital Manchester

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Chorlton Community Garden

The Community Garden restoration is going ahead. We have removed the pergola and large flower pots; will be doing some potting up of plants which can be saved on Feb. 20th 11-1pm; have consulted over the health of the mature fruit trees; begun to formulate ideas about how the space can be used to reflect the interests of the community consultation; and applied for a grant to clear the space and put in some paths. Updates can be found on our website and at Our Green Chorlton. We still need a

home for the huge Phormiums (see picture with CV member Linda in front to see the size of them.

Contact Chair@chorltonvoice.org if you'd like to play a part,

Updates: https://www.facebook.com/groups/397106765420680

https://ourgreenchorlton.org.uk/community-garden/

A shop front for Chorlton Voice?



We have been invited to occupy the shop at the front of the precinct (ex-Hays Travel ex Thomas Cook). This would be a fantastic opportunity to show that a community hub in the centre of Chorlton is valued. We are currently doing calculations as to whether we can afford the costs and have applied for advance notice of business rates relief. It is my no means certain we will get this. We would love to hear members' views on this and to have offers to help get the premises ready if we are able to go ahead. The picture shows what the unit oculd look like.

Contact: chair@chorltoonvoice.org to express interest.

Chorlton Alliance and Let's Re-imagine Our Chorlton

The fortnightly open discussions in Let's Re-imagine Our Chorlton, which emerged form Chorlton Alliance, are continuing. There are ideas being taken forward to create a Cooperative shell for initiatives across Chorlton and for a one-stop communications platform. Everyone is welcome to join the discussions. Contact Shaun@chorlton.coop to be added to the mailing list to get notices of meetings and notes from any meetings you cannot attend.

Makers Market Stall

We have booked a stall at the February 19th and at the April Makers Markets 10 -4 on Manchester road. Do come along and talk with us or even do a stint on the stall.

Gaumont Picture House

Still no news – negotiations are ongoing.

AGM to be held 8th March 2022 7.30, Community Room of the Library.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absences
2. Minutes of last AGM March 12th 2019
3. Matters arising from the minutes of the AGM, March 12th 2019
4. Nomination of Officers
5. Nomination of ordinary committee members
6. Chair's report
7. Treasurer's report
8. AOB: current planning issues and notices

The meeting will be followed by opportunities to hear from and discuss exciting projects in Chorlton: Chorlton Visioning Project (Simon Hooton, CLT) and the Let's Reimagine Initiatives (Shaun Fensom, Chorlton Coop).

Papers follow.

Item 2. Chorlton Voice – Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th March 2020, 7.30pm

18 members present

Apologies received from four members

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Committee Nominations:

The following nominations were proposed, seconded and unanimously approved:

Chair - Carolyn Kagan

Treasurer - Barry Whitmarsh

Other Committee members: Catherine Brownhill, Hazel Gibb, Mary McGovern, Lindy Newns, Peter Topping.

No nominations were received for the post of Secretary

Additional volunteers are still sought to join the committee.

Chair's Report: Carolyn Kagan presented her review of the past year's achievements and thanked all those who are involved in the work of Chorlton Voice. Notable points were: the successful operation of the Arts Festival; an increase in networking with other Civic Societies; an increase in networking

across groups in Chorlton; continued scrutiny of planning proposals; an increase in social events and visits; involvement in Chorlton community events; support for members doing Lifesaving and natural environment projects. The Society currently has more than 200 registered members.

Treasurer's Financial Report: Chorlton Voice has broken even over the past year and the bank balance stands at £816.55. In March 2019, the Society had a bank balance of £822.55. Funds are raised through donations at meetings and raffles at social events. Expenditure is on printing and website maintenance. We are open to ideas about how to spread the fundraising across the membership – we do not have the resources to be able to administer the re-introduction of a membership fee.

The Chair and Treasure's reports were proposed, seconded and accepted.

AOB: None

Item 4. Nominations for Officers, all of whom have retired and are eligible for re-election. Please send nominations to chair@chorltonvoice.org or volunteer at the meeting. Nominations received so far are:

- Chair: Carolyn Kagan
- Treasurer: Barry Whitmarsh
- Secretary – vacant, nominations welcome

Item 5. Nominations of Ordinary Committee Members received to date:

- Peter Topping
- Catherine Brownhill
- Mary McGovern
- Hazel Gibb
- Lindy Newns
- 5 vacancies - Please send nominations to chair@chorltonvoice.org or volunteer at the meeting.

Item 6. Chair's report

The last AGM was in March 2020. Since then we have had the pandemic (which continues) and been in various forms of lockdowns. Nevertheless Chorlton Voice has been active in contributing to development sin Chorlton, initiating projects and communicating with members.

Communications

As the first lockdown began, we realised that communicating with members would be mostly electronic, but also essential. We made visits to those on our membership list

for whom we did not have email addresses to make sure they had support for what was going to be an isolating time. Over the two years we:

- issued 17 Bulletins, imparting both COVID-relate information and local news. These are put onto the website.
- sent emails to members if there are important issues coming up.
- undertook a membership survey in 2000 to test the interest in resuming meetings which would have to be online, and other things. The response wasn't great, but there was very little interest in on-line meetings, so we did not introduce them.
- had articles in Open Up Magazine, which alas, is no more, and in South Manchester Focus – these were about the Arts Festival but also promoted Chorlton Voice.
- Peter Topping gave in an interview on ALLFM prior to the 2021 Arts Festival.
- held 5 stalls in the Makers Market, Whalley Range's Celebrate festival and Merseyfest. Again these were mainly about the Arts Festival or the Community Garden, but held information about Chorlton Voice more widely. Eleven new members have been recruited from the stalls and they have proved good vehicles for engaging the public.

Currently we have 221 members; 11 new members and 10 have left since March 2020. Thanks to Mary McGovern who does a great job communicating with members and maintaining the membership database. At the moment we do not charge a membership fee, so a member is anyone who requests being added to the mailing list.

The website has had a bit of a makeover to bring it up to date. There is still more work to do on this, which we are doing gradually. We have increased the number of Facebook posts and Tweets we make, as Chorlton Voice @chorltonvoiceCS and Chorlton Arts @chorltonarts. We would really welcome someone to oversee the social media side of things.

Planning

The committee has met more frequently during the pandemic – fortnightly from March – August 2020 and then gradually back to monthly. We considered about 7 planning applications per meeting, and thanks to Barry Whitmarsh who collates the applications, communicates with members at meetings over planning issues, and liaises with the planning department at the Council. The number of changes made without the requisite planning permission is still substantial and we have noted a number of developments which have taken little notice of residents' opinions. Some challenges we have made have been successful, others not. We have reported those planning issues we have discussed in the Bulletins to members.

Money

Barry is also the Treasurer and has kept careful records of income and expenditure (see Treasurer's report), including the accounts for the Arts festival which has been kept separate and overseen by Mary McGovern. We have recently made some bids for extra funding from the Lottery; Manchester Wellbeing Fund; Rob Ferguson Foundation (which is linked to MSV, the housing trust developing the precinct); MCC's Neighbourhood Investment Fund. These applications have been made by Chorlton Voice for specific projects – a Jubilee strand to the Arts festival, the community garden, and muralling the Chorlton lift shaft. We will be considering whether or not to become registered as a charity in order to attract more funding (at the moment we are a not for profit, non-incorporated community association with charitable aims).

We obtained a grant from the Rob Ferguson Fund in 2021 which enabled us to buy some gazebos for the Arts festival. These are available for other community groups to borrow.

Sponsorship for the 2022 Arts festival has been obtained from HLF Berry; Frosts the Butcher; Redeemer Church; Mosscare St Vincent Housing; Southway; BUZZ.

Monthly Meeting, Trips and Social events

All but one meeting has been cancelled since the last AGM. The one we held on a very rainy evening in the autumn of 2021 was a social meeting coupled with a book launch of Peter Topping and Andrew Simpson's latest gem '*Nothing to do in Chorlton'*.

As part of the Arts Festival, though, we held a large launch party and Chorlton Voice was clearly visible at the event. Thanks to Cath Brownhill for organising this event.

Networking

We try to work collaboratively with others, finding issues of mutual interest. There was only one meeting with the South Manchester Civic Societies during this period – the very important issue of graffiti on street furniture such as utilities' junction boxes was raised. This is a problem for Chorlton but we have not had the resources to do focused work on this yet.

We continue to convene the **Chorlton Alliance** (https://chorltonalliance.co.uk/), which meets quarterly to share information between groups across Chorlton. One project to emerge from the Alliance during this period was the fortnightly, online discussions **Let's Reimagine Our Chorlton** hosted by Chorlton Coop. This in turn spawned the Green Chorlton map and there are other developments in the pipeline, including a one stop online information hub and an umbrella cooperative which can support new groups.

We were part of the development of the **Our Streets Chorlton** project which came and almost went during this period. We are part of the steering group for the

Visioning Chorlton project which seeks to bring together a fresh vision of what people who live and work in Chorlton would like to see (and how this could be made to happen). This builds on the Vital and Viable Chorlton work previously reported.

Along with the Alliance, we have plugged away at getting the **Chorlton Metro Lift Shaft** decorated - it looks as if we will be successful in getting at least two of the faces of the lift shaft muralled. St Werburgh's Rd lift shaft is next! A bid for funding is has been submitted.

We have taken the initiative to coordinate the restoration of the **Chorlton Community Garden** along with Chorlton CLT and Chorlton Plant Swap and Our Green Chorlton. We carried out an online survey and have submitted three bids for funding have been submitted (one we know to have been unsuccessful at the time of writing). Initial steps are to clear the garden, lay some paths, and hold a competition for a design to widen the gateway. The idea is for the garden to be a green hub for inspiring growing and as a place of rest and even of entertainment. We have been accepted onto a Sow the City programme called Growing Manchester. Opportunities for the community to get involved will be announced https://ourgreenchorlton.org.uk/community-garden/https://www.facebook.com/groups/397106765420680

We support and promote the work of our members Jeeny Slee and Cath Brownhill who deliver **Chorlton Lifesavers** resuscitation training. In the past year they have run 21 training sessions and trained 235 people – a lot of potential lifesavers.

Progress on all of these projects has been reported to members via the Bulletins.

We have recently convened a walkaround the district centre with the neighbourhood officer, Chorlton Traders and one of the councillors, to identify some measures that need to be taken to immediately improve the environment.

We have been offered, rent free, a **unit in the Precinct** and are currently calculating the costs of taking this on, including applying for discretionary rates relief. We hope to be able to occupy the unit and demonstrate a lively community hub, providing a base for engaging with members of the public.

All Things Arty

The 2020 Arts festival had to be cancelled, but we managed to produce a highly acclaimed virtual festival with artists from across the arts spectrum. We also mounted some training sessions in how to create and use these virtual worlds. Thanks to Peter Topping and VisioningLab for creating this experience.

The 2021 festival was touch and go due to lockdown rules and opening restrictions. In the end a large Festival of 115 different events took place in September and all events were made into a virtual festival as well.

It is always a struggle to find sponsorship for the festival but we have to date just about managed to get local sponsorship which enables us to cover our costs, which is fantastic. We also have a new Patron, Jackie Kay, renowned poet. Details of sponsors and patrons, as well as the past three Festivals are all available on the website www.chorltonarts.org

In December 2020 and 2021 we judged the Christmas window competition and awarded cups to Tiny's Tipple and The Curious Fox (2020); and Tiny's Tipple and Love Lucy (2022).

Southway Housing and Tyson construction worked with us to place some art work on hoardings on their construction site on Barlow Moor rd, which doubled as promotion for both the Arts festival and Chorlton Voice. Unfortunately during the past 6 months, the artwork has been graffiti'd – an increasing problem in Chorlton blighting the environment.

This year will be the 20th anniversary of the first Chorlton Arts Festival.

Climate Action

Members have been active in the development of both Chorlton and Chorlton Park Climate Action plans. They both took a back seat during this period but activities have been revived in recent months. Chorlton voice has been driving the restoration of the community Garden along with Our Green Chorlton and others (see above).

Conclusion

As you can see, Chorlton Voice still has fingers in lots of pies and is taking the lead on many issues.

Looking back at the number of initiatives we have had over the last two years, I am very proud that so much has been achieved given the small number of members who are actively volunteering their time and energy. And just think how much more we could accomplish if more people were to step forward to join the committee - or just to get actively involved in a specific project.

Our priorities for the forthcoming year are:

- Explore the possibility of using an empty unit in the Precinct as a community hub and if viable make it a success;
- Ensure a successful restoration of the community garden;
- Deliver a successful 20th Anniversary Arts Festival;
- Complete the painting of the Chorlton Metro lift shaft;
- Consider funding possibilities.

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
- 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 – we really need to fill the vacancy for Secretary, as per our Association rules, and have vacancies for ordinary committee members.

chair@chorltonvoice.org

Carolyn Kagan

February 2022

Item 7. Treasurers Report

As we did not hold an AGM last year, my report is for the last two years. I have also taken the opportunity to change to reporting by calendar years, so if anyone has kept previous reports, you will see some overlap.

When Friends of Hough End Hall wound up in July 2020, they transferred the balance of their funds, amounting to £1,284.67, to us on the understanding that, at some point, we would use it to support heritage projects.

Our remaining funds, available for general use, now only amount to £401.63, around half of what we held two years ago.

Our fund raising is limited to donations and raffles at our public meetings, so general income is well down compared to previous years. On the other hand, our expenditure has been low, mainly because we have not been printing newsletters. However, the cost of our public liability insurance has significantly increased to cover the activities of Chorlton Arts.

Our bank account is also used to hold funds on behalf of Chorlton Arts and to receive grants and donations paid to partner groups who do not have their own bank accounts.

CHORLTON VOICE ACCOUNTS: 2020 and 2021

	2020	2021
CHORLTON VOICE GENERAL		
Starting Balance	£885.75	£1,992.42
General Income (Donations and Raffles)	£67.80	£40.00
Income (Transfer of funds from Friends of Hough End Hall)	£1,284.67	
TOTAL INCOME	£1,352.47	£40.00
Printing -Newsletters	-£120.00	
Printing -Community Garden Banner		-£41.12
Public Liability Insurance	-£100.80	-£280.00
Chorlton Traders – Annual Subscription	-£25.00	-£25.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	-£245.80	-£346.12
End of Year Balance for Chorlton Voice General	£1,992.42	£1,686.30
CHORLTON ARTS		
Starting Balance	£155.48	£2,639.35
Income (Grants and Donations)	£3,032.00	£1,415.00
Expenditure	-£548.13	-£4,009.07
End of Year balance for Chorlton Arts	£2,639.35	£45.28
FUNDS HELD FOR PARTNER GROUPS		
Grant to Chorlton Connectors		£500.00
Funds released to Chorlton Connectors		-£350.00
Grant to Hey Baby!		£500.00
Funds released to Hey Baby!		-£500.00
Donation to Chorlton Lifesavers		£100.00
End of Year Balance		£250.00
Bank account balance	£4,631.77	£1,981.58