

GREEN STREET GREEN ASSOCIATION AGM 2017 – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A successful year in most areas of our operations, although the 'manana' of some of the organisations we try to deal with is an irritating and frustrating aspect we have to put up with. Many of you will have read of the aspirations the Committee and Trustees have with regards the Greenwood Centre, and we hope to have at last heard from the City Bridge Trust with regards funding to pay for the Audit Assessment of this property we require as a precursor to a full cost application for making the Village Hall inclusive to disabled users prior to the AGM – but we wait with bated breath.

Our other major concern has been the obligation to the Charity Commission to put our documentation and registration of the Charity that owns/runs this hall through the Trustees to the prescriptive level necessary. I mentioned this subject at last year's AGM as well as the one before and in numerous Newsletters of the Village Society, but it was only around four weeks ago that the continuous hard work of our Secretary Margot Rohan that we have finally achieved success. We decided to go down the road of a CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation – something that our President and former Chairman Tony Bradley looked at a number of years ago, and that was recommended by our legal advisors. This action is now complete save for the Land Registry changes that take the ownership away from the Trustees and place it as part of the CIO, thus negating the continual cost of costs each time Trustees change. We now have a new Charity Commission Registration Number, along with a properly constituted Governing Document that lays down how we have to operate The Association and gives us the power to make changes – unlike the 1958 Lease that the Charity Commission had as our formal Constitution despite the fact that we had bought this building some 15 years later and made numerous changes to our Articles of Association. The changes mean very little to both ordinary members and the Committee in the way we have structured the Charity and Village Society under the umbrella organisation of the GSG Association, so most people will not notice any difference from the way we have been for the past decade or so.

As you will see from the separate Report from Bob Mills Membership of the Association remains healthy, although we are well aware that many residents do not know of our existence or if they do, what we actually do, and we are constantly looking at ways of improving this situation. Our web site has been revamped, our information leaflet is being revamped with the initiative of trying to notify all non members of the benefits of joining the Village Society, and as I mentioned earlier we are trying to improve both the Hall and the activities that take place in it. We were unsuccessful in obtaining a grant to introduce improvements to the stage area and provide facilities for presentations, but once the other initiative of disabled facilities has been settled one way or the other, we may revisit this area.

Following the retirement of our long standing Committee member Dot Ryder as Hall Booking Secretary, I am very pleased to say this has been taken on board by Mrs Margaret Lawrence and has allowed internet communications to be improved in that area thus enabling better notification for those involved in such requirements as cleaning the premises which is done by an outside contractor on demand. We are still the cheapest hire charges in the Borough, and also now have an arrangement whereby Pratt's Bottom Hall will send any potential hirers they cannot accommodate to us, and us to them.

Another stalwart of our Committee is Eddie Sims, and he has decided to stand down as Hall Manager. After much discussion, we have decided that in the light of Government Legislation on pension arrangements, National Insurance and other areas, we do not wish to directly employ anyone but seek a volunteer to replace Eddie but in the meantime rely on hirers to notify us of any damage or rectifications needed for its smooth running.

Many of you will be aware that the Greenwood Pre-School has been sold to the Crofton Schools Academy Trust (shortly to be renamed) and we have signed a lease with them for the use of the hall for both morning and afternoon sessions. Gill Russell and Lesley Wittey are to remain employed by CSAT and will each manage a session so again, apart from a healthy increase of our income, little will change to the outsider. However, they are introducing many new ideas and have already begun improvements to the back room, rear outside, the introduction of a telephone and internet facility. In addition, experience has shown that on some occasions the hall central heating is insufficient to reach a comfortable temperature and we are considering an additional two radiators despite only upgrading our system recently. Unfortunately, as a result of the new times for the Pre-School, we have lost one of our long term afternoon hirers as well as a reduction in another's bookings, but it was an opportunity we could not afford to lose.

I announced in the latest Newsletter that I am not standing for the Committee after the AGM, and this means a new Chairman of both the Society and potentially the Trustees as we are introducing changes to our Constitution on election procedures. At the time of writing this we have had no expressions of interest in the position, but if any of you would take on this task it would mean we could look forward to a continuing move towards our goals. At this point I would like to thank my other Trustee colleagues as well as Committee members for all their time and effort over the past years, but particularly Margot Rohan who works tirelessly in keeping all the documentation as well as the website up to scratch and without whom we really could not function.

I will remain a Member of the Association, and will be around from time to time although will be spending most of my time overseas, travelling around the UK, or in Bromley, so will be retaining a deep interest in what goes on and can only wish you all well in the future endeavours of the Association.

Bob Trott

May 2017