



THE Chislehurst SOCIETY

Chairman's Report on the year ended 31 December 2012

I am pleased to report on the activities of The Chislehurst Society for the year to 31 December 2012.

The Society had a busy year. Among our achievements, we:

- launched a new strategy to renew and improve Chislehurst High Street,
- found and purchased a property for the community's use,
- increased our net membership numbers by 7% to over 3,800.

Chislehurst High Street

The Society was instrumental in establishing a group with representatives from businesses, residents and local organisations, with a view to drawing up a strategy for the High Street to be a destination of high quality and choice – a social place, making the best use of our public space, with a vibrant day and evening economy.

As in many town centres, Chislehurst's shops and restaurants continue to struggle against changes in the way people shop, and how they interact socially, against a tide of economic bad news. Unlike others, Chislehurst has a number of positive factors



Chislehurst High Street – let's keep it special!

in its favour that should enable it to win the struggle, but only if concerted action is taken. This is what the Town Team is working to achieve. It started with a questionnaire, completed by nearly 400 residents.

With financial support from the Society, and the hard work of its members, the Town Team, led by committee member Alison Stammers, has started to make real progress on a number of the objectives that were clearly high priority for local people, including:

- de-cluttering the High Street,
- saving Prickend Pond,
- getting better cleaning and maintenance programmes,
- reviewing car parking facilities and charges,
- developing better traffic-management arrangements,
- developing consistent and attractive branding for the High Street,
- upgrading the design standards for retail outlets,
- attracting new vibrant businesses to the High Street.

Our local ward councillors are fully behind the Town Team, helping us to navigate our way through the complexities of the London Borough of Bromley (LBB), and in recent months we have seen a marked change in responsiveness, with agreed actions in most areas. More detail will be provided at our AGM on 25 April, and in future editions of *Chislehurst Report*.

A property for the community

Several years ago, the Society began to look for suitable premises when we became aware that we had been left a significant bequest from a former member, Charles Dunn, for that specific purpose. It has been a long and frustrating process, with few available properties near the centre of Chislehurst coming close to meeting our needs.

In October 2012 the old chapel in Queens Passage, off the High Street, came onto the market. The building is not in good condition, but once repaired (and possibly rebuilt, if the cost of repairs is too great), the building will suit our needs perfectly, with an office for the Society, other space that can be let for regular income, and a larger space that would be available to Society members and the community at large.

We were able to secure the purchase, and have enough funds left over in the bequest to undertake the required remedial work, and we moved into the building in late March. I must thank Derek Nash, who has given up so much time in searching for suitable properties, and in getting the old chapel ready for occupation.

We will notify members when repairs are completed, with a formal opening and renaming of the building, probably early in 2014.

Membership

There has been a welcome increase in interest in the Society over the last 12 months, following many years during which our membership numbers have been in slight decline, as for so many similar organisations. The Society nevertheless remains one of the largest civic trust charities in the UK, with over 3,800 members, about 30% of the adult population of Chislehurst. This gives the Society some authority in its dealings with Bromley Council, and provides members with additional representation in local matters.

Since last year's AGM, there has been a net increase of 240 individual members, a 7% increase, as a result of a number of factors, including:

- membership application is now easier, and online,
- the first year's membership is free of charge,
- the focus on the High Street has raised our profile,
- our upgraded website attracts ever-increasing levels of visits.

Tony McClarty, our new membership secretary, has managed, at the same time, to increase the number of our road stewards, so important in attracting new members, and maintaining the interest of our current members.

I am also encouraged that the profile of our road stewards and our members, and indeed that of our executive committee, is now looking distinctly more diverse than when I joined the committee, and long may this continue!

Other activities

Of course, the Society has continued to undertake its wide range of activities for the benefit of members and residents of Chislehurst.

Planning and architecture

Our planning subcommittee meets every four weeks. The subcommittee looks at all applications for planning permission in Chislehurst, reviews whether they accord with planning policy, and whether it is appropriate development for Chislehurst, attempting to balance the desire for progress with the need to protect our local heritage. Following changes at LBB we now review all applications and decisions on-line, using LBB's Planning Portal. There have been a number of teething problems, some of which have been reported in *Chislehurst Report* during the year. However, Terry Baskett, its chairman during 2012, has managed to navigate the subcommittee through the transition, and we are grateful for his important work, and that of the members of the subcommittee, Professor Barry Redding, Bob Matthews, and Reg Parry.

There have been no major or contentious items this year, but still a steady flow of applications that require careful scrutiny and comment. During the year the subcommittee

reviewed 465 applications, and made 31 objections and 11 observations¹. The new Deputy Chief Planner at LBB has commented on the importance he places on such local democratic scrutiny, and we in turn will continue to provide constructive criticism and comment on LBB processes where we believe it necessary to do so.

We have raised a number of concerns with LBB planning department over the last year, particularly regarding enforcement. We were pleased to see that the telecommunications mast illegally erected off Elmstead Lane was eventually removed. Local members of the Society were active in pushing for action, and we were happy to support them in their successful campaign. We maintain our vigilance on outstanding enforcement cases.

There have been many proposals from the Coalition Government, which, rightly or wrongly, believes that the planning system needs shaking up to prevent its acting as a block to economic growth. We have submitted our views on proposals put out for consultation, supporting those that warrant it, but critical where, as in the proposed relaxation of control over rear garden extensions, there is little of merit to support.

I am sorry to have to report that Terry Baskett has tendered his resignation from the executive committee, and is no longer available to chair the planning subcommittee. I would like to thank Terry for the hard work and energy he has put into this role over the last six years. I am pleased to report, however, that Professor Barry Redding has agreed to take on the role of the Chair of the subcommittee, which also has a new member, Madeline Clarke, who has already brought her experience and insight to bear.

Education

Joanna Friel was co-opted onto the executive committee during the year, and has added significantly more resource to support Roy Hopper in meeting our education objectives. Joanna has already started a local history group to assist in further research.

We continue to provide information to residents and non-residents who write to us about Chislehurst people and places. One such was Peter Snow, the TV and Radio presenter, who contacted us to get our help for one of his *Random Edition* Radio programmes, which was broadcast in January 2013, with Joanna's participation.

During the year we acquired, from a former resident one of only three indentures for the sale of Camden Park, signed by William Willett, with large hand-coloured plans. While in good condition, it requires some attention, and we have applied for lottery funding for professional repair and framing. It will then go on display.

Our regular members' talks continue to attract increasing numbers of members. Subjects in 2012, organised by Liz Abels, included Napoleon III and Sir John Lubbock, (a famous

¹ There were 481 in 2011, when we objected to 50, and made observations on 17.

local resident who introduced the concept of bank holidays to the UK).

Our website continues to increase its coverage, and attracts increasing interest. In 2012 the site had over 80,000 visitors, steadily increasing, and now averaging over 250 a day. There has been much new content added, particularly of local history. *Chislehurst Lives* contains ever-increasing information on former Chislehurst residents of note or interest, and a recent addition to the site is a Chislehurst history tour, comparing old images with photographs taken now at 36 different locations.

There are now over a thousand old images of Chislehurst on our website, including 300 images lent to us by a member, Peter Ribbons, from his personal collection. These are a valuable resource to local schools and other researchers, and to reflect Peter's generosity we have named the archive *The Chislehurst Society's Ribbons Collection*.

Chislehurst Report is now published four times a year in full colour. *The Cockpit* is still monochrome, published twice yearly. In addition to editing *The Cockpit*, Roy Hopper continues to provide talks to local groups, articles for other local newsletters etc., and responses to family history and other enquiries that we regularly receive. We will continue to review our publications, in terms of style and content, and thank Frances Follin, who oversees our publications for us.

We were sorry that Donna Bompas retired from running the Society's Environmental Awards last year, but after 12 years, we understand the desire to move on and the benefit of bringing in new blood. Donna had overseen a huge increase in the range and number of entries, and in the profile of the Awards over her time in the role, and we are extremely grateful for the all the time and effort she put into this.

The 2012 Awards were presented on 14 June at Bullers Wood School. More than 1,100



Some of the happy prize-winners at the Society's awards this year

students took part, over 200 certificates were awarded, and prizes worth over £2,000 were awarded to individuals and schools. Babington House School was awarded the Alan Jones Award for the school with most winning entries.

We are delighted that Society member Viv Smith has taken on the role of organising this year's Awards, which will be presented at Babington House School on 7 May. We have taken this opportunity to review the name of the Awards. They were set up in 1990, and named in honour of a former Chairman, Alun Jones, and his wife Joy. The Awards have always been fully funded by the Society, and with the passage of time, we feel that it is now appropriate to make the Society's sponsorship more explicit.

Our relationship with schools in Chislehurst is important to us. Alison Stammers leads our Schools Forum, and oversees the various agreed events, such as The Mix, through which pupils from different schools come together to develop ideas for Chislehurst. We are also providing support to schools that are interested in developing curricula based on local subject matter. Joanna Friel is currently developing local material, images and other sources, which schools can use next year to mark the centenary of the start of the Great War.

Environment and amenities

During 2012, we supported the efforts of the Trustees of Chislehurst Commons to rescue Prickend Pond, which has been close to terminal decline. The heavy rains in 2012 have helped this effort, with record levels of water in both main ponds, but work was still needed to prevent further deterioration. The Society arranged for students from Greenwich University to develop ideas for improving the ponds and nearby areas of Commons as part of their studies. Many of the ideas were very interesting, and some were incorporated in the proposals that are now being implemented by the Trustees.



Prickend Pond, with the old chapel to the left

We provided funds for a second bore hole to be sunk at Rush Pond after unsuccessful attempts to remedy the problems left by the contractor who sunk the first bore hole. Attempts to claim compensation from the contractor have been unsuccessful.

A grant made by us to Coopers School is being used to create a multipurpose garden, with particular thought to children with learning difficulties, with help from Pettswood National Trust keeper Sam Pettman. We look forward to its completion.

Christine Barrett attends both the Chislehurst and Mottingham Safer Neighbourhood Team meetings on behalf of the Society, and keeps us advised of developments, and we are grateful to Sgt. Richard White and his team for their innovative approaches to policing in Chislehurst. Christine was a volunteer at the London Paralympics, and gave us a very interesting short illustrated talk at the autumn Road Stewards' meeting.

Most of our local police officers were on loan to the Olympics during the summer, and since then there has been much discussion and speculation on the future of policing in Chislehurst, and more widely in Bromley and across London over the last year. Fears that Chislehurst would have no police presence seem to be unfounded, but it is clear that changes will take place to reduce costs. It is all so different from a hundred years ago when there were 49 police officers here, housed in the splendid police station that is now an Italian restaurant! Because of the concerns of many members, we have arranged for a special presentation on this subject by senior officers from Bromley at our AGM on 25 April, after which there will be opportunities for questions from members.

The railway bridge on Chislehurst Road was closed for most of the year, resulting in slight reductions in traffic in Chislehurst High Street, but congestion on Bickley Hill, Leasons Hill, and other places where the traffic was re-routed. The work was completed on time, and most people regard the new bridge as a significant improvement.

Roger Lawson has continued to monitor this and other traffic developments for the Society, and to pass on constructive comment to LBB's traffic team. He has been involved with the Town Team in developing ideas for improved traffic management schemes for the High Street, and keeps us and members aware of other developments, such as the proposals for the Dartford Crossing that we reported in November.

Tony McClarty at one stage had three jobs for the Society, treasurer, membership secretary and leading on litter and graffiti. On the latter, Tony has played an important role in helping the formation and development of the anti-litter group led by Society member Gwen Lardner. The group has focused so far, and with some considerable success, on working with Coopers College to deal with the large and unacceptable levels of litter left on the commons between Royal Parade and the College.

Tony continues to arrange the Society's own regular litter-picking days, which continued throughout the year despite the heavy rains that occasionally interfered with this important work.

Finance

Colin Martin was co-opted onto the Committee in October as our new Hon Treasurer. Colin is treasurer of a number of local arts groups, and brings his experience at an important time, as we become a property owner.

The Society's subscription income (and related Gift Aid) increased by 4% this year. Investment income was substantially higher than in 2011, mainly because of the income from the Dunn legacy balances, but also as a result of the re-allocation of our investments in late 2011. We underspent significantly on our budgeted grants, and as a result, we achieved a surplus of £31,189 in the year before legacies and revaluation of investments. Including those amounts, our surplus for the year was £117,303.

We are concerned at the paucity of requests for grants from the local community, and Lesley Pullar, who chairs our grants committee, is leading on the development of a new approach, to agree a future 'pipeline' with potential beneficiaries.

People

I would like to thank all members of the executive committee for their hard work and dedication to the Society and the community of Chislehurst. We have also developed a small group of 'Friends of the committee', drawn from some of our more active road stewards, on whom we are able to call when more hands and brains are needed. Let us know if you are interested in working with us in this way.

We were saddened to hear of the death last autumn of Keith Heselden, our membership secretary for so many years, and we continue to miss Keith's counsel and experience. Terry Baskett has resigned from the committee, and we thank him for his work on planning over the last six years. I would also like to thank Anne Johnson-Rookes, the committee's minutes secretary for four years, who has stepped down following a reorganisation of our secretarial arrangements.

Christine Wearn was co-opted onto the executive committee last year to provide much-needed secretarial and administrative support for a committee that is more active over a wider range of activities than ever before, and we are grateful for her work so far. Finally, a big thank you to all our road stewards for the unsung but vital support you provide to the community of Chislehurst.

*Tony Allen, Chairman
March 2013*

Trustees' Annual Report

THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY is a Registered Charity, No 298413, with principal address at P0 Box 82, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5TT and is established under a Constitution adopted in February 1989.

Trustees (and members of the executive committee) during 2012 and to the date of this report were:

Tony Allen (Chairman)	Frances Follin
Lesley Pullar (Vice-Chairman)	Joanna Friel (co-opted September 2012)
Derek Nash (Secretary)	Keith Heselden (until April 2012)
Colin Martin (co-opted October 2012)	Roy Hopper
Tony McClarty (Membership Secretary)	Roger Lawson
Liz Abels	Barry Redding (co-opted February 2013)
Christine Barrett	Alison Stammers
Terry Baskett (until February 2013)	Christine Wearn (co-opted September 2012)

The Officers relinquish their office every year but are eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting; one half of the other (longest serving) members retire at the AGM, and are also eligible for re-election.

The Custodian Trustees for the Access Drive are Messrs Chapman, Parry, Saxby and Turner (see Note in the Accounts).

Objectives and achievements

The Society's objects are to promote high standards of planning and architecture in Chislehurst, to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of Chislehurst; and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic, environmental or public interest in Chislehurst.

Our planning subcommittee continues to scrutinise all applications for development in Chislehurst; changes at LBB Planning Department require continual changes to the way we operate. We continue our quarterly publications, and continue to introduce new members' meetings.

Our website continues to develop, and, with more than 1,000 old images of Chislehurst it is now an unrivalled resource for researchers. We continued our series of regular free meetings for members on a range of local subject matters. The Society's Environmental Awards reached their 22nd year, and we again supported the annual Big Draw, and continued to lead on Chislehurst Schools Forum.

We have played a major role in developing plans and action for improving Chislehurst Town Centre, working with local traders and residents and with Bromley Council. The Society is providing financial support for the Town Team, which oversees the programme.

Financial Review

Interest rates remained at low levels throughout 2012 with no sign of any change, and indeed some concern that they may fall even further. The Trustees have continued to reduce the Society's cash deposits and fixed income funds, transferring funds into higher-yielding investment funds. Given the state of the financial markets, we now review our investment objectives, asset allocation and fund performance annually. The value of our investments increased by over 7% in 2012 as stock markets rose overall.

During 2012 our investment and fixed interest funds produced an income substantially above deposit rates with a positive result on a total return basis. This income supplemented our subscription income which, with the associated tax credit from Gift Aid, showed an increase of 4% over 2011.

A final distribution was received from the Trustees of the Charles Dunn Will. The funds

continued to be treated as restricted, and the capital protected, and part of the funds were used to pay for the purchase of freehold property in February 2013. The balance will be held to fund necessary work on the building.

Governance costs were higher in 2012 mainly as a result of legal fees incurred in reviewing the Society's structure, dealing with a baseless claim against the Society, and review of property options.

Grants and affiliation payments totalled £16,012, a significant reduction over 2011. A programme for developing a future grants 'pipeline' has been introduced to create more certainty over the future profile of grants to local organisations.

Reserves policy: we need to retain sufficient reserves to generate a regular income to supplement our modest subscription income and enable us to finance our objectives. Our current reserves are considered large enough to give financial support to local schemes whose activities meet the Society's objectives as laid out in our constitution, and to meet the costs associated with providing this support.

This Report was approved by the Trustees on 20 March 2013 and signed on their behalf by:

A.S. Allen, Chairman

C.L.Martin, Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts (shown on page 11)

Note 1: Final distribution of Charles Dunn legacy bequeathed to the Society.

Note 2: 1st part legacy deposit matured 1 February 2013; 2nd part on 7 day notice deposit.

Note 3: Investments are represented by holdings in COIF Fixed Interest and Investment Fund Income units.

Note 4: This freehold access drive off Lubbock Road, Chislehurst is being retained indefinitely for environmental reasons, to enable enforcement of a covenant restricting development to one dwelling on land previously owned by the Society. With no cost available and valuation methods lacking reliability, the Trustees place no value on it.

Note 5: Grants fund for local environmental purposes and the Society's Awards; Environmental Contingency fund to meet the cost of challenging any major threat to the local environment; Premises funds for set-up costs of possible future premises for the Society, and (restricted fund) to purchase premises under the terms of the will of Charles Dunn. The Environmental Contingency Fund and unrestricted premises fund have been transferred to other funds, since they are no longer required in their present format.

Grants and Affiliation fees:

A total of £16,012 was distributed to local bodies for specific purpose in the furtherance of the Society's charitable objects:

Trustees of the Commons	£8,850
Chislehurst Town Team	2,562
Willow Wildlife Rescue	1,500
Chislehurst Community Map	1,750
The Big Draw	900

Smaller donations and affiliation fees totalling approximately £425 were paid to institutions such as British Legion, CPRE, HACAN, LBRF, Rotary Club, London Forum, Harris Hospicecare.

The accounts on page 11, and the notes above, having been reviewed by the Independent Examiner, were approved by the Trustees on 20 March 2013, and signed on their behalf by:

A.S. Allen, Chairman

C.L.Martin, Treasurer

Statement of financial activity for the year ended 31 December 2012

(For notes, see page 10)

	2012	2011
Receipts		
<i>Voluntary</i>		
Members' subscriptions & donations (inc tax reclaimed)	£ 10,623	£ 10,232
Legacies (note 1)	33,651	322,000
Investment income	62,857	38,756
<i>Charitable Activities</i>		
Promotional sales	325	114
Festival	-	7,691
Total receipts	£ 107,456	£ 378,793
Payments		
<i>Costs of Generating Funds</i>		
Voluntary income	1,186	2,936
<i>Charitable activities</i>		
Grants to third parties	16,012	79,021
Planning/conservation	5,353	6,995
Local study	5,837	4,603
Festival	-	19,231
Jones Environmental Awards	3,370	3,669
<i>Governance costs</i>	10,858	4,449
Total payments	£42,616	£121,859
Revenue surplus/(deficit)	64,840	256,934
Gains/(deficit) on investments, unrealised	52,463	(15,374)
Accumulated funds b/fwd	1,480,945	1,239,385
Total funds c/fwd	£ 1,598,248	£ 1,480,945

Statement of Asset and Liabilities as at 31 December 2012

Cash and short-term deposits	£ 68,622	61,450
Fixed-term deposits (note 2)	723,917	673,767
Debtors	13,500	6,140
Investments at market value, 31/12/12 (note 3)	792,305	739,842
Heritage property (note 4)	Nil	Nil
Creditors	(96)	(254)
Net assets	£ 1,598,248	£ 1,480,945

The funds of the Society (incl. funds designated for particular purposes)

General Fund	£160,470	£155,252
Designated funds (note 5)		
Grants Fund	703,861	614,666
Environmental Contingency Fund	-	16,692
Premises Fund (unrestricted)	-	20,568
Premises Fund (restricted)	733,917	673,767
Total funds	£ 1,598,248	£ 1,480,945

THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY
NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
and
OPEN MEETING
on
Thursday 25 April 2013
7.00 for 7.30 pm in the Methodist Church
Prince Imperial Road, Chislehurst

AGENDA

- 1 Reception, with refreshments (from 7.00 pm)
- 2 Introduction and welcome by the chairman (7.30 pm)
- 3 Apologies for absence
- 4 Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 26 April 2012
- 5 Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2012
- 6 Opportunity for members to raise questions on the Annual Report
- 7 Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 8 Appointment of Officers
- 9 Election of members of the executive committee
- 10 Closure of formal Annual General Meeting. [by 8.00 pm]
- 11 Presentation and open discussion on:
 - improvements to Chislehurst High Street
 - proposed changes to policing in Chislehurst

Note: Only members of the Society are entitled to vote or speak at the Annual General Meeting.

The officers of the Society, and approximately one-half of the executive committee, are elected annually. Under the Charities Act 1993, persons elected are required to be acceptable as trustees. Nominations to serve as officers or members of the executive committee should be made in accordance with the Constitution of the Society. It is convenient, but not essential, for nominations to be made on the forms available. These may be obtained from the Secretary, PO Box 82, Chislehurst, Kent. BR7 5TT.

Tel: 020 8467 0900

email: membership@chislehurst-society.org.uk

Copies of the documents contained in this report, and the Independent Examiner's Report, are available on our website: www.chislehurst-society.org.uk

The Chislehurst Society is a Registered Charity, No. 298413