

Amenities Committee – Annual Report 2014-2015

This has been my seventh year as Chairman of the Amenities Committee and it has been another full and busy year.

The Fun Day in July 2014 was again successful and enjoyed by all those who attended. After careful thought and discussion it has been agreed not to hold the Fun Day in 2015, but to look at ways of improving and adapting the format for the future. I know the Events Sub-Committee are considering various ideas for a 2015 summer event – keep an eye on the Parish Newsletter 'Ash Matters' for plans and dates.

The Christmas Fantasia continues to go from strength to strength and is a much loved event for the whole community. The attendance at the switching on of the Christmas tree lights continues to grow. Father Christmas brought smiles to faces of all those attending, including the residents of Abbey Wood Care Home who enjoyed the event immensely. During 2014 there were further additions to the festive lights in the Parish, extending the welcoming feeling of good will and community during the festive period.

The Christmas concert on 13 December 2014, given by The Guildford Friary Brass Band, was a huge success, with all proceeds going to the Shooting Star Chase Children's Hospice. The band has already been booked for Saturday 14 November 2015 and is not to be missed.

2014 saw the commencement of the Centenary Commemorations for the First World War. On Sunday 10 August 2014, an emotional and moving rededication of the newly refurbished Ash War Memorial was attended by representatives from the Royal British Legion, serving personnel from 4 Medical Unit Aldershot and 22 Field Hospital, Normandy Veterans, the Mayor of Guildford, Parish, Borough and County Councillors and representatives from local youth organisations. The Service itself was carried out by representatives from all Churches within the Parish. Families of those remembered on the Memorial itself were invited to attend, and despite the wettest day of the summer I am pleased to advise many accepted the invitation.

As a further commemoration, two new engraved benches are currently on order to enhance the War Memorial Gardens.

The hanging baskets throughout the village in 2014 were of a much higher quality than in 2013. The Parish received a Silver Gilt Award in the South East in Bloom competition, as well as being named as Best in Category. Well done to all concerned!! Again after much discussion the decision was taken to withdraw from the competition in 2015 to look at ways of improving any future entry.

Ash Parish Council for the fifth year running, held its own Ash in Bloom competition for residents and businesses within the Parish. I am delighted to report that this was very well received with more entrants than in the previous years. I am also extremely grateful to Mike and Jane Duffy of Budgens, who generously supported the event and sponsored the prizes to all the successful gardeners. I am also very pleased to announce that, at the time of writing this report, Mike Duffy has already pledged his continued support for this completion.

The Parish still continues to operate a rolling environmental programme to upgrade and increase the Parish owned street lighting columns. In addition to continuing to replace yellow lights with white lights in areas that are considered to be suffering from anti-social behaviour, the Parish are also trialling LED lanterns, in an effort to provide better quality lighting while reducing our carbon footprint.

Finally, as this is my last report before standing down at the 2015 election, I would like to thank all the Members of Ash Parish Council and the Parish staff for their commitment and support during my time as Chairman of the Amenities Committee.

Cllr Doug Richards
Chairman of the Amenities Committee