

Bolsterstone Community Group Annual General Meeting
22 March 2016, Bolsterstone Village Hall
CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome to Bolsterstone Community Group's 15th AGM. You will have already been made aware of our activities this year via BCG's newsletters, so I will just summarise them here.

This year, BCG's management committee has raised £803 by pursuing grant applications and we are very grateful to Sheffield City Council and The Bridge Shop for their support. We also raised just over £2,000 from our combined Christmas events - the Christmas Fayre and Wreath Making Evening and are extremely grateful to everyone who supported these events. The money raised has allowed us to make improvements to the village and, through donations, to benefit St Mary's Church and 4SLC - where Bolsterstone Community Group's plaque is now on display, showing our support for Stockbridge Leisure Centre. We are also pleased to be able to continue to support the Bolsterstone Village Hall Trust through hall hire fees. We are grateful to all the volunteers who have helped to keep the village looking good for residents and villagers alike, by maintaining village benches and regularly stocking and maintaining village troughs, borders, boundary stones and hanging baskets, and the ongoing maintenance of BCG's allotment garden. We've also been glad to be able to lend equipment to other local groups and to St Mary's Church as they have continued to improve the church yard.

I am pleased to report that our committee meetings continue to be well attended and all committee members are encouraged to contribute to discussion on various issues affecting residents. Apart from the opportunity tonight to raise issues, if you wish to bring anything to our attention during the year, please contact me or Tony, the Secretary, and we will try to put them on the agenda for our next meeting.

BCG's allotment on Folderings Lane has been a great success this year. The plot holders have worked really hard and the fruits of their labours have been clear to see as well as tasty to eat. The boundary wall was repaired and Broomhead Estate gave us permission to erect a second greenhouse as there was such demand for additional "hot house" space.

St Mary's Church Summer Fayre was once again a highlight of village life in July and many BCG members were pleased to be involved to support the organisers from the Church, on the day. It's good to see The Castle Inn providing a focal point for the village again and I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Castle for allowing us to use their upstairs room for our committee meetings.

Whilst recent temperatures have been some of the warmest on record, snow fell on the morning of Saturday 21st November - the day of BCG's annual Christmas Fayre! Despite this, the Fayre was one of the best attended for years and several stall holders have already made bookings for next year! There were more stalls this year - as well as our old favourites, several of them were new to Bolsterstone - and lots of people came to listen to their children and grandchildren (who all attend local schools) singing and making music in the Church. We are extremely grateful to St Mary's for allowing the Church to be used for charity stalls, the art display and for the children to perform at such a lovely event. Santa's grotto and the refreshment stall were very busy. The Buffalo burgers were as popular as ever and the new Bradfield traditional pies were a sell out. The raffle raised a lot of money for the village and we would like to thank all those who provided raffle prizes - both local businesses and individual members - as well as those who sold raffle tickets. We are also very grateful to everyone who provided so many cakes and buns for BCG's own cake stall.

Bolsterstone Community Group

We almost ran out of space for all the cakes, until someone brought various cake stands on which to display the abundance of goodies. We would like to thank the army of volunteers who helped with the Fayre, making it such a busy, popular and happy day.

We were pleased to be able to use the Christmas Fayre event as a platform to explain more about the Heritage Lottery Funded Ewden Valley World War One project. We have been working with local residents and Stocksbridge High School students to research the contributions made by Ewden Valley residents to the WW1 effort.

BCG's annual Christmas Wreath Making Evening in December was another popular event. We never cease to be amazed by people phoning up as early as September to book places for the Wreath making evening in December, and this year we had to turn people away. The fantastic array of homemade wreaths, put together in under 2 hours is breath taking - maybe the mulled wine and mince pies help! Not only was this a lovely social evening with a great atmosphere, it also helped increase BCG's income to help us continue in-house funding for village projects and maintenance. As grants from public bodies are increasingly susceptible to "cuts", we must budget to use our own funds to keep up our village maintenance programme. So we appreciate all you do to support us, either by making donations or volunteering to help with events.

Finally it is worth reflecting on where we live, how lucky we are and how we are a community of many parts - the Choir, The Church, The Village Hall Trust, BCG, BAHG, the volunteers etc and everyone who attends social events, not least of all those in the Castle Inn. We all work together to conserve and preserve the jewels of our surroundings - the valley, the green spaces, and the floral displays. However, we need to be constantly vigilant about things such as security, fly tipping and the preservation of the Green Belt.

This year Bryan Howard from Bolsterstone Archaeology and Heritage Group has left the committee because he has stepped down as BAHG's Chair person. We are very grateful to the support he has given to the group over the past 3 years and we are grateful to welcome Susie Abrahams, BAHG's new chair, on to BCG's committee as his replacement. Other members of the committee are willing to stand for re-election. They have been nominated and seconded and we will take a vote on their election. If anyone else would like to join the committee please let me know - the commitment is not too onerous but we are always open to new members joining our ranks. We remain committed to helping preserve and conserve all that is best about the small, but active village of Bolsterstone, in line with BCG's original aim: *"To promote the well-being of the people of Bolsterstone and adjoining areas, through the advancement of education and information and the conservation of the environment."*

It just remains for me to thank you, on behalf of the Management Committee, for coming tonight. Although there are too many volunteers to mention individuals by name, I would like to thank everyone who has supported BCG and its Management Committee over the year. The Committee and I will do our best to support the volunteers who will be involved, alongside us, in Bolsterstone's activities throughout the coming year.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Ewden World War 1 Project Open Day Saturday 16 April 2016**
- **Christmas Fayre Saturday 19 November 2016**
- **Wreath Making Evening Wednesday 7 December 2016**

Alan Rodgers (Bolsterstone Community Group Chair)

Bolsterstone Community Group

