

## Report for Ham Amenities Group 2018 Annual General Meeting

Ham Amenities Group has had another successful year. This Annual General Meeting will see the retirement of Gill Douglas-Smith as Secretary and Graham Douglas-Smith as Vice Chairman. Gill has been our secretary since 2004, and as Social Secretary has organised the HAG trips since 2005. Graham became Vice Chairman in 2002 and has also monitored local planning applications. I will say a few words of thanks at the meeting for all their commitment and achievements over the years. Your officers meet monthly. My thanks go to Gill, Graham, Julia, Jean and Matthew for all their help and hard work.

This time last year we did not have an organiser for Ham Fair, our most important event. Sarah Sinclair had organised two successful fairs in 2016 and 2017, but did not want to continue. Several people were approached without success. Very fortuitously a small item on our HAG page in the Ham and Petersham Community Magazine, seeking admin help with Ham Fair, had four responses. One was from Julie Page who agreed to be the new Ham Fair Organiser, and a second was from Angela Catlin, appointed as the admin assistant. This didn't happen until December last year, by which time we were getting nervous about how Ham Fair 2018 was going to be organised! This does illustrate clearly just how well-read the magazine is.

Julie, backed by a strong committee with Angela's tremendous help, produced another very successful Ham Fair on Saturday 9 June. There were more stalls than recently, the donkey rides were back, and more money was raised for grants to local organisations than ever before. The weather was again very kind to us. This really was a very successful community event that we are proud to be responsible for.

This year we have had four talks. In January Jason Debney spoke to us about the Thames Landscape Strategy and our riverside legacy in Ham and Petersham. In April Gordon Elsdon gave us a second talk on the history of Ham from prehistoric times up to the building of Ham House. In June Hilary Pereira told us the fascinating story of Lilian, the gentleman's yacht. In September 50 years of the Wates estate was the title of my talk.

We have had one trip this year to the Odney Club at Cookham. This is a stately home owned by John Lewis Partnership. We were very grateful to Jill Mason, one of our members and a former partner at John Lewis for making this possible.

We had planned a Summer Reception this year, again at the wonderful old building at Cassel Hospital. Sadly, it was so hot and humid that week that we had to cancel the event. When we went to Cassel last year it was raining so much that we couldn't go into the garden to see the new prize-winning Sanctuary Garden. Is even HAG suffering from climate change?

This year we haven't been as active as previous years. Your officers have discussed the future of HAG, and want to talk to other local organisations about a joint future with one of them. Our biggest responsibility is running Ham Fair and using the profits to grant aid local groups. We own the Gatehouse garden acquired after a long battle in the early 1980s led by Alys Brown. We are also a registered charity. We would like your views at this year's AGM.

.David Wjlliams.