

## **CHELLASTON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024-25**

It's been another busy year and March is here which not only means the start of spring but also that it is time for our AGM and review of the year. Some of the things that we do, such as the Christmas Carols and Songs evening in December have become fixtures in the calendar and we will continue to organise such events and arrange new ones as long as you want us to.

"Keeping an eye on Chellaston" is of course one of our primary functions and although most of the green fields in the ward have now been built on, development is continuing apace on Boulton Moor and along Infinity Park Way. Where this happens, there will be more traffic generation which can and does have an effect on Chellaston's roads, even if the development itself is in South Derbyshire rather than the city. So we are constantly looking at the roads and how well they are coping and making representations where they are not. The new traffic lights at the High Street junction are now installed which help the A514 flow better, although their effect on High Street is debatable. The new crossing by Riber Drive is a big help for those visiting Aldi and Costa and we continue to ask the council to get on with improvements to the one by the church on High Street. We also continue to review planning applications, particularly those by businesses and we will object to any that we feel will seriously impact our area.

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the year was "Chellaston-in-Bloom" as it was entered for the first time in the East Midlands-in-Bloom competition run by the RHS. For this, it was necessary to involve more local groups and organisations all producing their own displays which were shown to the judges along with those areas that have been worked on by the Chellaston Community Volunteers over recent years. We were delighted to be awarded a Silver Gilt classification in the Urban category, which is quite an achievement considering that the East Midlands area stretches from the Humber to the Home Counties. The Community Garden, which was a joint initiative of the CRA and the CCA, received a special award for the Best New Permanent Landscape in 2024, which was unexpected but, of course, very welcome and the Chellaston Scouts were given the Judges' award for their display featuring the Olympic rings on Ridgeway. We would like to thank everyone involved in the various projects which went into this achievement for their hard work over the entire year to produce these magnificent results. We will be entering the competition again but we have reluctantly decided not to do so this year. The reason for this is because the RHS understandably wants us to improve year on year and in order to do this, we have to make some modifications and increase the scope of what we show to the judges. This takes time and so we will be using this year to make these changes. This does not mean that "Chellaston-in-Bloom" will not happen as usual as all the groups involved want to carry on helping to make Chellaston look great.

Whilst the CRA oversees the co-ordination of Chellaston-in-Bloom, it is the Chellaston Community Volunteers (CCV) who carry out the work on areas such as the Community Garden, the rest of High Street and more recently, the beds around St. Peter's church. The CCV have, up until recently, been a sub-section of the CRA but, during the year, it was decided that they should be a distinct group with their own committee etc. The new committee is now up and running and currently planning their activities for the year. The CRA will continue to part-fund the CCV and other revenue will come from their own fund-raising efforts. The CCV have a number of keen residents who regularly turn out in all weathers but there is always a need for more help. If you would like to come along to one of the sessions, please get in touch with the CRA. Gardening experience is not essential as there are other tasks that need to be done, so everyone is welcome. The CCV would like to encourage more younger people to volunteer and it is intended to arrange sessions at times that they could join in.

The Neighbourhood Board, which normally has a budget which can be used to fund local projects, has helped the CRA and CCV with some of the costs of providing the things that I have mentioned and we are very grateful for their support. The CRA is represented on the Board and we think that funding could be offered to a wider range of organisations than is presently the case. Funding will normally be considered for capital items or service costs and I would urge any club or society that is beneficial to the Chellaston community to apply. Contact our local councillors or the Neighbourhood Manager for more details.

As far as income is concerned, the CRA's monthly prize draw, the "Hundred Club", provides much of the finance for "Chellaston-in-Bloom" as well as covering the costs the various events that we organise or participate in. We have a good number of regular subscribers and we are very grateful for their support, but we would like some new people to join as a few have left during the year. You will see some forms around the room and please consider signing up as the Club really enables us to continue to benefit the community. Winners get up to £50 every month and it only costs a pound a week! Thanks to Roy Witheford for looking after the draw every month.

Finally, thanks to the committee who have been Ian Colder (Secretary), Roy Witheford (Treasurer), Andy Hill, Steve Gray, Jodie Hunt and, briefly, Ann Witheford, as well as myself. Roy Witheford wishes to stand down as Treasurer and is to be replaced by Andy Hill. I myself have now been in the chair for over 25 years and others are notching up quite long service records with the CRA. We are very pleased to have your support for what we try to achieve but there is no doubt that, if the CRA is to continue into the future, we need to think about who will run it when the present committee is no longer in place. In other words, we need people to come forward who feel as strongly about Chellaston and what happens here as we do. We will be asking for nominations for the committee shortly and I hope that you will all consider whether you could help with our activities during this year and beyond.

John Bowden

Chairman