

LAUNTON WI – SECRETARY'S REPORT 2021-2022

Yet another strange year but towards the Autumn we had returned to a kind of normality, Covid restrictions notwithstanding.

The existing members of the Committee remained the same since it was felt that in these uncertain times this was the sensible approach: however, we were fortunate to increase our numbers when Hilary joined us in March and Sherie subsequently came on board.

Yet again we were tasked with finding new ways to make sure that our WI could continue under the various restrictions of the pandemic. On occasion we were faced with changes directed by National and/or OFWI which required ingenuity in implementation. We celebrated our birthday in April by delivering small bunches of daffodils to members in the hope that they would not be missing our traditional fish and chips supper too much!

The Committee has worked hard to keep on top of the increased volume of correspondence, via email holding al fresco Committee meetings when possible and Zoom Monthly meetings during the first nine months of the year. Yet again we were so grateful to the Parish Council for the use of their Zoom account and to Jane Olds, Clerk to the Council, for willingly giving of her time to host these meetings.

This enabled us to hold our Annual Meeting, to consider the chosen Resolution ["A call to increase awareness of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer"], to try to "Play the Spoons" when Jo May attempted to initiate us, with hilarious results!: Graham Sutherland followed speaking on "Wicked Women" and our final Zoom session was delivered by Valerie Calderwood who enlightened us on the "Myths and Legends of the Stars".

September saw our long-awaited return to in-person meetings, in the Parish Hall but with all the relevant risk assessments in place. We were fortunate to celebrate this occasion with a talk from Julie Ann Godson on "1066: Oxfordshire and the Norman Conquest": Peter Hague followed with "West Wycombe Park and the Dashwoods" then Pam Newall with "Lesser known Rome" while the year finished with the Christmas attended by an alternative Santa.

The organisation of all our meetings took a great deal of behind the scenes negotiations since prior to September we had to take into account that not all speakers were prepared to present on Zoom and, post that, some were not willing to visit in person.

We have managed to maintain our links with the Village by submitting an article every month for publication in "Launton Lines" as well as in providing refreshments for the Autumn Village clean up and also for the various Produce Stalls where profits went to local charities. We enthusiastically contributed to the OFWI Christmas appeal collecting toiletries for Oxfordshire Homeless and Crisis.

The year was not without its sadnesses: regrettably some members were unable to rejoin us after being members for a number of years. Also, in August we suffered the great loss of a very long-standing member, when Gwynne Harrington passed: Jerusalem will never be quite the same without her piano accompaniment – we certainly continue to feel her loss.

As a retiring Secretary I would like to end on a personal note: I have enjoyed a very close working relationship with Helen and have also respected all the hard work that is undertaken by your Committee. I wish the incoming Secretary and the incoming Committee my very best wishes.

Celia Manderson
March 2022