

Chair's Report at the Annual Meeting

26 March 2024 / 20:00 / Online

Overview

I am pleased to report that the Launton Community Communications Group (LCCG) has had a very successful year. Our financial position continues to improve and we have significant reserves on which to draw should we need to (as we have needed to in the past); more on that in the Treasurer's report from Carina later on. The extra funding from the Parish Council, recognising the additional housing in Launton Mews being completed has helped again this year. LCCG would like to thank the Parish Council for this subsidy. Our aim over the long term is only to break even, recognising that we are not a profit-making organisation. After several years of difficult conditions and with reserves now back to previous highs, we can again plan for improvements in processes and infrastructure for the group going forward.

We aim to keep the percentage of commercial advertising space in Launton Lines to under 20% of total pages, which is relatively low for a publication of its type. Even in these uncertain times, advertising revenue has held up relatively well; this includes the new pre-booking discounts, many thanks to all advertisers who have stayed with us and committed to further advertising. Thanks to the work of our Advertising Manager, Jenni, we've managed to add new regular advertisers and they, plus existing advertisers, have been switching over to colour adverts too. From the issue-by-issue records that we keep, income has exceeded outgoings on each issue this year.

I'd like to highlight that the continuing success of the LCCG is due to the dedication of everyone involved, including:

- the regular team (Rob C, Matt H, Carina C, Kathy G, Kate G, Jenni W, Shirley J) who have made the production and distribution of each issue go smoothly
- the distributors, coordinated by Shirley, who regularly deliver *Launton Lines* (LL) to their neighbours
- our advertisers, both those who have supported us for years but also the new regulars who have embraced the colour advertising
- our printers, Lonsdale, who are great value and have managed fast turnarounds over the past year, while also helping to collate some issues
- Steve W and others who maintain communications on the online channels
- Launton Parish Council, without whose grant we would struggle to continue; and
- the contributors, both regular and occasional.

Summary of the past year

- We have been joined on the committee by Carina, who has already made a big impact.
 - Bank accounts are now fully digital, signatories are being updated and the accounts are regularly updated and monitored.
 - Thank you for all this, and thanks too to the previous signatories, Pat and Nikki, for your help with the bank account updates.
- We'd also like to thank Toby who had the role of Secretary but has had to step down this year. We are now looking for volunteers to fill this role which requires only a small time commitment.
- Matt has been producing some great centre-page spreads, more on that in the Editorial Report.

- A consistent following remains for the online copy, and this version means Jenni has fewer hard copies to send to advertisers which reduces admin and costs.
- We had many excellent photographic contributions from Ella, our regular photographer.
- We have been strengthening our processes and systems to keep the running of the LCCG activities as robust as possible.
 - This includes completion of the Register of Access, to ensure there is a backup for each person for each of the key systems we use.
 - We've added shared mailboxes for the editor and treasurer accounts to help ensure all are in the loop on email communications and can send and receive without using their personal accounts.

The year ahead

- We look forward to welcoming Lesley Thompson to the committee and she will help represent the Parish Council and keep up communication between the two groups.
- We will be decommissioning the financial package Xero, which will make a further saving to our monthly expenses.
- We will aim to carry out a survey of our readership (both Launton Lines and other media).
- Linked to this, we will continue to work on keeping content relevant for the years ahead.

As always, we would welcome help from anyone who would like to be either regularly or occasionally involved with the LCCG. This will be my last year in the post of Chair (although I will carry on in the committee, if desired, looking after the website and technology). So we are looking for volunteers for the roles of Chair and Secretary, please let us know if you are interested and we can provide any training or handover needed.