

Chairman's Report 2021

A whole tenure summary.

Back in 2015 when I first sat in the chairman's seat, I had no idea quite how the Partnership was viewed by the general populace of Waltham Abbey, or by WATC. No idea what direction the Partnership would or should take. Nor how I could or should influence the direction of travel.

It's been quite a ride.

I feel that we have re-established ourselves in the general and wide activities of our town and town council. I say re-established because I've always been very well aware of the high profile that the Partnership once had but which had diminished somewhat over time and for a variety of reasons.

With totally different leadership a new and different approach was clearly needed, and decisions had to be made. I had to be clear in the place I felt the Partnership should be.

What I did not want was for it to be a complaints centre, to be used by the town as a battering ram against the WATC and EFDC. More a buffer that could take concerns to the appropriate Authority and then pass back the explanation to the concerned resident.

I wanted it to be an organisation that does things. Positive and tangible things that stay long in the memory.

Since 2015 those things have included the Sun Street Meridian Mosaic, the Town Centre Direction Signposts, the Colouring Book, the Welcome Signs, the Annual Pancake Races, trials of Business Meetings (breakfast and evenings), Christmas Sandwiches for town centre shops, periodic Newsletters and our own Christmas Cards.

The seemingly never-ending saga of the Heritage Trail continues, and the support of other initiatives, most recently and currently the WAFoL (Waffle, as it is nicknamed).

WATP means positivity is the message I wanted to convey, and little by little (by little) I think we have achieved that.

Obviously the last 20 months of lockdowns and restrictions have been difficult and restrictive, but through all of that the Partnership has established itself as the 'go to' organisation for many requests for thoughts and ideas from the civic world and has continued to meet (albeit via Zoom until recently), to discuss and act.

We only have one official sub-committee, and that is for Tourism. This too has continued to meet, discuss and act under the chairmanship of Tricia Gurnett. A separate report of their activities will be given.

There is no doubt at all that we are once again central to much of the life of WA, and it is because we have stuck at it and ensured that people know we exist!

We use social media as much as is reasonable, and with the help of Mark Boyce we have established a new (and still a little underused) website. On this site there are links. They are links to all relevant sites in WA where almost everything that is happening around town can be found.

The links page of our site could be used for everyone who could then be up to date with just what WA has to offer!

As you know we meet every second Tuesday to discuss issues and give reports, and every month I am grateful to see people turning up to join in and contribute.

We are not able to conduct an official meeting without EFDC representation, so a particular thank you is due to their representative, who is almost always Cllr Helen Kane.

But I never cease to be grateful to all those who support our efforts.

Mentioning no names (ok I will) a thank you to Tony for continuing in his deputy chairman role and always adding balanced comment to proceedings. To the treasurer Diana for regularly counting the cash and producing the monthly report. To Richard for having greatly improved our visibility as Publicity Officer, and to Paula for taking the Minutes every month, which is a job no-one wanted to do.

So, another year has passed and the good thing about it is that there is unlikely to be another quite like it. We hope!

And finally, I like to have a new project each year, so it's thinking caps on for 2022, and I hope the new chairman is as well supported as I have been.