

COLUMN FLOWER CLUB

CHAIRS REPORT FOR AGM at CROSS HOUSES COMMUNITY CENTRE, CROSS HOUSES 7.15pm TUESDAY 9th NOVEMBER 2021

Good evening everyone and welcome to Column Flower Club for our AGM.

When I delivered my October 2019 report (2 years ago) little did any of us know what would be happening less than six months later. Come March 2020 Corona-Virus (Covid 19) had raised its ugly head and the UK found itself in a World Wide Pandemic.

The lives we knew literally changed overnight. Businesses, Schools, Non-essential shops (who remembers the panic buying of toilet rolls and pasta) all closed. Flights and holidays cancelled and of course our social activities stopped. We did not know just how much our lives were going to be turned upside-down. But the hardest was yet to come - unable to meet our families and friends. Some folk have experienced the most horrendous time of their lives and our hearts go out them. For others it has thankfully not been so traumatic but I think it's made all of us sit up and take stock of our lives in general.

With release from lock-down and the easing of restrictions club was able to return in September 2021 (after a couple of false starts); and we are now settling into our new home at Cross Houses Community Centre. Some of you may wonder why we changed venue. A couple of factors, some members were hesitant about returning to Belvidere School which I (and the committee) fully understand and appreciate. I (we) want everyone to feel comfortable and safe in their surroundings. Secondly Belvidere has been selected by the government as one of the 50 schools in the country to be completely rebuilt so we would have had to find a new home soon.

October 2019 I gave notice of my intention to retire as Chair at the 2020 AGM but my intended retirement passed us by due to the pandemic. Therefore along with the rest of the committee I continued to support club throughout this time and now we find ourselves in November 2021. We (the committee) are trying to help the club move along and to keep some continuity. Chair is a position I have held for around 20 years and thoroughly enjoy. Plus it's been a privilege to see club grow and progress over the years. Unless anyone has already decided to come forward at this AGM to hold the Chair position you know that I have offered to continue as Chair for a further year until the next AGM October 2022 when I will retire. If someone else has decided to take the position rest assured help will be there for you should you require.

So 2020/21. ~~ The committee, I cannot thank you enough for your continued to support throughout this unprecedented time. Club members have been contacted by email and newsletters produced by different committee members. Committee meetings have been held in gardens where we had our fingers crossed the weather was going to be kind. When we were not able to meet indoors or in the garden meetings were held by zoom (who had heard of that before all of this). My special thanks go to Barbara for setting up all our zoom meetings. Not only were some of our committee meetings held this way we also had a get together for members to be able to see each other and discuss their lives and show off longer hair styles!! Also held was a zoom demonstration in July by Carron White which was opened up for other local clubs to "tune into". My thanks too to Carol our Social Secretary who sent birthday & other appropriate cards plus Christmas cards to club members. I may not have mentioned all the committee in their individual roles but they have all played a major part in helping us to keep together and in the return of flower club. So my thanks go to all the committee: Donna, Jan, Viv, Suzanne, Sandie, Carol & Barbara.

Jan has worked hard in getting together a new programme for 2022 which I hope you will all enjoy. Our new programme means our meetings will be a different format to that we have been used to but I hope you will all find them just as entertaining, helpful and interesting.

It has been lovely to see members return again and some previous members also to come back. Plus to see some new faces, some of whom have decided to join club. Whether you are a member or you just want to pop along as a visitor it is nice to see everyone and you will always be made welcome. I hope you will find Column Flower Club is unique and you will find and make "friends through flowers".

I would just like to conclude by saying I hope Column Flower Club continues to grow and all of you please enjoy what club has to offer for the rest of 2021 into 2022 and you that you continue to enjoy club for many years to come. My personal wishes to all of you, your families and friends for a happy, healthy and safe future.

Trish Payne (Chair)