

Chairman's Report AGM 2022

Looking back at 2021 and rereading my report last year it is fair to say it wasn't a vintage year for the MVP, from being battered and bruised, focussing on cancellations of events to community support 2021 proved to bring continued challenges.

Thankfully with increased returns to work and people building their own support networks, we were not called upon to reinstate the Mortimer Covid Helpline although John and Andy stood ready at one stage just in case. The MVP meetings continued via zoom all bar a one-off meeting in Julia's garden in the summer.

As the risks to health from the Covid virus ebbed and flowed, we began to put our toe back in the water, as far as running our events schedule.

With a successful delayed Spring Clean in May, we went on with growing confidence booking Farnham Maltings for a very enjoyable production of Syrian Baker, Gary Starr who brought us the Mischievous Elves Panto, the relaunch of the Lunch Club and of course the Scarecrow Trail. The enthusiasm for all of these events has been considerable demonstrating that people had missed the community activities, that perhaps had been taken for granted.

Similarly, after the payment holiday to Affiliates coming to an end, we saw great interest from local groups to continue to affiliate with the MVP and seeing value in being seen as linked in to the community.

Our own numbers have grown too in recent months, bringing new energy, ideas and pairs of hands. All are most welcome.

After many years in post, Julie Carter has finally announced her retirement as Affiliates Secretary (after a few veiled threats) so that she can take a little extra time in Italy and I'm sure all over the globe albeit I understand will remain a member of the MVP and I am sure lend her support to the new incumbent. Julie, through her energy and enthusiasm as taken what was a germ of an idea to have a few "friends" associated with the MVP to what in recent years has consistently been over 40 local Clubs and Organisations. Her drive and personality has kept these groups engaged, as evidenced by the excellent contribution we get to our Newsletter and her always present support to help Affiliates with loan equipment or indeed just signposting them to help that may be available from the MVP. Thank you, Julie.

It is with great sadness that we recently said goodbye to John Bull, who for many years had been a stalwart of the MVP. For many years, albeit quiet in meetings he was always a font of knowledge on practical issues and first with his hand up to volunteer. For many a Fun Day he would put in a Full 3-day shift, there at the start as we set up and never signed off until the Fairground was completely clear and everything delivered back into storage. A true character of the village, his footprints can be seen in every part of village life. Rest in Peace, John.

As we see our lives gradually returning to some degree of normality from the Covid Pandemic and our MVP Calendar beginning to fill for the year ahead, we have all suddenly been derailed by the horrific events in the Ukraine. With the tragedy of war in Europe, we are all left feeling helpless and now our usual events and activities seem trivial and meaningless. Certainly, many things now appear trivial and yet it feels right that we should adopt the "Keep calm and Carry on" mantra but perhaps in the coming MVP meetings we can consider if there is anything the MVP can be doing to help in a very small way all of the Ukrainians whose lives have been shattered.

Doug Overett
Chairman

March 2022