

Directors' report for the year ended 5th April 2020

Financial report

During the year £7,000 of grants were received for the Haslemere Biodiversity Project (HBP). This comprised £5,000 from Lobs Charity, £1,500 from Haslemere Society and £500 from CPRE Surrey. In addition, Haslemere Town Council Small Grants Committee have awarded a further £2,197 for this project. Expenses relating to this grant will be paid directly by Haslemere Town Council and will not appear in the Haslemere Vision Ltd financial statements.

The restricted funds as of 5 April 2019 of £2,725 have all been released. £2,000 was transferred to the Community Rail Partnership for their work in reviewing the station travel plan and the remaining £725 has been released to unrestricted funds.

Expenses during the year comprised costs relating to last year's Annual General Meeting and the annual filing fee. Insurance is lower than previous years because Haslemere Town Council paid this directly for us since most of the community engagement work during the year was related to the Neighbourhood Plan.

The company has been eligible to take advantage of the small company exemption so that an audit has not been required and we expect that will continue to be the case.

Neighbourhood Plan

A small group has been working throughout the year on the Neighbourhood Plan. Haslemere Town Council approved the draft plan in May 2019 and again in October 2019 when some changes were made primarily relating to the settlement boundary policy. Following adoption of the plan by the Town Council a new joint working party was formed comprising five members from Haslemere Vision and seven Councillors. In March 2020, the Regulation 14 consultation launched. Every household received two notifications, through the post, of the on-line survey, how to access it and how to obtain paper copies. To compensate for the effects of the Covid19 lock-down, the consultation was extended to a total of 12 weeks, twice the statutory required period. Online surveys, drop in events and webinars via Zoom were used to gather feedback. There were over 1,200 survey responses (there were 4 surveys in total) and numerous emails and letters, as well as detailed written responses including from Waverley Borough Council, Haslemere Society, Surrey County Council, CPRE, Surrey Hills AONB Board, The National Trust, Historic England, Thames Water, The Surrey Wildlife Trust, developers and residents' associations. The working party is currently reviewing all of the consultation evidence and updating the Plan.

Haslemere Biodiversity Project

The Haslemere Biodiversity Project (HBP) has successfully obtained funding for a mapping project that will support the Wildlife Corridors policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. Two ecologists have been employed to collate information from a wide variety of different sources to generate a comprehensive biodiversity knowledge base for the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan area. Work is currently underway to identify and map the most

Directors' report for the year ended 5th April 2020

important wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect key nature conservation sites across Haslemere. Initial output from the mapping work will be available by the end of August.

A further area of work is a series of mini-projects aimed at surveying and monitoring protected, keystone species that require corridors and stepping stones in order to sustain their populations. These comprise dormouse, riparian mammal and garden pond newt surveys. HBP is collaborating with the Surrey Dormouse Group (SDG) to monitor populations in and around Haslemere. They plan to supply and deploy around 50 dormouse nesting boxes along a 3 km transect of hedgerows and woodland west of Grayswood. Three mink rafts have been set up along the route of the River Wey and it is planned to set up a fourth on the feeder stream to Frensham Great Pond (sourced from Golden Valley), which is also within the Haslemere NP area. They are also seeking to collaborate with Waverley's Countryside Ranger Team, the National Trust, the Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group (SARG) and local garden owners to monitor newt populations in selected ponds across Haslemere as a basis for identifying key pond corridors and conservation strategies for these species.

Sustainable Transport

The sustainable transport group has met regularly through the year, primarily working on the initial scope of their remit and identifying and prioritising projects.

Working with members of Haslemere Town Council, Transition Haslemere and Surrey County Council, they put forward several short and long-term projects to improve sustainable transport routes, primarily (but not exclusively) within Haslemere. Initiatives are intended to be temporary (but made permanent if they work well) and included fixing missing sections of pavement, new pedestrian crossings, reduced speed zones and providing more room for cycling. As always with changes to streetscape layouts, there are many opinions to negotiate and support to garner, but the group remain committed to improving the experience for green transport users in the area.

They plan to hold an electric cycling event once the Covid restrictions are sufficiently lifted and to do community engagement to gauge support for potential projects. They have attended meetings of the Waverley Cycle Forum and continue to engage with other community groups in the area.

Wey Hill Fairground

A small group has met occasionally during the year to discuss the potential development of the Wey Hill Fairground site. Meetings have taken place with officers and councillors of Haslemere Town Council and Waverley Borough Council but there is currently no significant progress to report. Once the present detailed work on the Neighbourhood Plan reduces, work will resume on this theme.