

2022 BVS Chairman's report – Caroline Pettigrew

In this the 56th year of the BVS.

We did not have an AGM in 2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic so this report is a summary of the BVS events and activity over a two-year period from April 2020 to April 2022. Committee membership currently stands at 11.

Joiners since April 2020 – Hayley Roberts, Tom Laugharne, Lydia Wanstall

Leavers, since April 2020, Robert Marsden, Rachel Chancellor

Thanks to the committee for all their hard work, particular over these past two years where difficult decisions have had to be made regarding whether to go ahead with events considering the pandemic. Thank you to all the helpers of the BVS events, we can't hold these events without them and we really appreciate their support.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to thank Ron Freeborn's family for the generous donation to the BVS from funds raised in memory of Ron.

Events

2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and government-imposed lockdown we were not able to hold our usual calendar of events in 2020. The Summer Dance, Comedy night, bonfire night, and Boxing Day walk were all cancelled. We managed to hold two events.

Worzel's Weekend – 28th-31st August

We held a scarecrow competition – 'Worzel's Weekend' – over the August bank holiday weekend as a socially distanced event. Scarecrows were required to be sustainable and dressed under the theme 'holidays'. We had a total of 23 scarecrows. Event organized by Rachel Chancellor, Caroline Pettigrew and Andy Jarvis.

Santa's Sleigh – 24th December

With the government 'rule of six' on group activities, we managed, with some careful organization, to get Santa out on his sleigh. Unable to stop at the Playclose to hand out individual presents, Santa instead made a circuit of the village, extending his journey to include Chailey Gardens and Cossicle Mead. Organised by Adam Stockley. Thanks to Ian Bacon, the reindeer and to James Wanstall for driving the escort vehicle.

2021

We were hopeful that our 2021 events would start up again with the new 'freedom date' at the end of June. However, we cancelled fireworks night, largely due to insufficient funds available at the beginning of the Summer to buy the fireworks. We also decided to postpone comedy night until 2022 and instead hold a Halloween Disco in collaboration with the pre-school.

Summer Dance – 31st July

The original date for the Summer Dance was scheduled for July 17th but following a delay to the 'freedom date', the event was postponed until July 31st. Thanks to the Barretts for hosting and for being so accommodating with the change of date. Thank you to McFunky for the

entertainment, which they generously provided for no charge beyond the PA costs. Thanks also to the Blewbury School PTA for use of their marquee. The event was attended by approximately 200 people. Organised by Jo Laugharne and Caroline Pettigrew.

Halloween Disco – 30th October

This was our first indoor event since lockdown, and people impressed with great fancy dress outfits. Organised by Adam Stockley and Ciara Hardman-Cole. Thanks to Jo Laugharne for decoration, Chris Smith for the bar, and 'Too Much Stuff' for the entertainment.

Santa's Sleigh – 24th December

We decided to go ahead with the BVS Christmas events despite the looming omicron Covid-19 variant. We were able to use our newly purchased contactless card readers, which have greatly improved payment at our events. Organised by Adam Stockley. Thanks to Ian Bacon, Andrew Hewson and the reindeer and to James Wanstall for driving the escort vehicle. Thanks also to the brave Blewbury Brass Band who carried on playing despite the constant rain!

Boxing Day Walk – 27th December

The Boxing Day Walk was held on 27th December due to the extra bank holiday. We kept the main village hall closed due to the ongoing Covid-19 concerns. We had one of our biggest turn outs despite more wet weather. We were delighted to present a new prize – the Ron Freeborn Memorial Cup, which was awarded to the most 'creative and artistic' entry. The cup will be engraved each year with the intention that this will remain as an enduring memorial to Ron. Organised by Caroline Pettigrew. Thank you to all the volunteers, judges, and to Paul Finnon & family and Sally and Andy Lewis and Pat and Bernard Mattimore for putting on the drink stops. Thank you also to the Blueberry and Red Lion for setting up drinks stops and welcoming our walkers.

2022

Roger Cambray New Year's Day Walk – 1st January

New Year's Day Walk, saw approximately 20 walkers headed to the Crown and Horns in East Ilsley. Thank you to Tony Salter for sorting the last-minute change of venue due to the Bell having to close its doors due to Covid-19 related absences.

Comedy Night – 12th March

After over two years wait, Paddy Lennox was back, bringing three fantastic acts. We sold out of tickets two weeks before the event – thank you to the village and beyond (we had a few tables of non-Blewbarians!) for supporting this event. We raised £1000 for 'Kids at play', which maintain the village playgrounds. Organised by Ian Cluett, Hayley Roberts and Caroline Pettigrew. Thank you to Wendy Carless for the sound, Adam Stockley for the lighting, Phil Rogers for transporting the fridges, the Blewbury Players for the use of their equipment, and all our helpers at the bar. We were under pressure to get the hall cleared straight after the event as the Blewbury Market was due to take place in the village hall the next day and were so grateful for the way that everyone pitched in to help clear up.

Easter Egg Rolling – 17th March

Easter egg rolling was back after a two-year absence. Amazingly the sun was shining and we had a fantastic array of spruced up eggs and a great battle for the longest egg roll. The

BVS puts this event on at no charge and pays for the Easter egg prizes. Organised by Alex Elderfield and family.

Future events

We are hoping that the remainder of 2022 sees a more normal schedule of events. We are delighted that the Blewbury Beer Festival will take place on Saturday May 14th. This is being led by Tom Laugharne alongside a team comprised largely of non-committee members. We believe that this approach of having a sub-committee team that includes villagers who don't necessarily want to be part of the BVS committee but want to help run individual events will bolster the BVS and enable us to organize events beyond our usual calendar of events. We have the following events to look forward to for the remainder of this year.

Blewbury Beer Festival – Saturday 14th May

Summer Dance – Saturday 25th June

Bonfire Night – Saturday 5th November

Christmas events – Santa's Sleigh, Boxing Day Walk, New Year's Day walk