

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2022 (AGM: Pat Yaxley)

I have never quite understood why it is necessary to have both a Chairman's Report and a Trustees' Report – until this year. The latter Report is a document of Governance designed to show that we are properly compliant with our Aims and Objectives and deserving of Charitable status. The former gives the Chairman an opportunity to be a little more personal.

There is absolutely no doubt that this year has been a roller coaster ride for us all – individually and collectively. Initially it seemed that we would just have to put everything on hold for a relatively short while but, when it became apparent that the Corona Virus was not going to go away any time soon, we began to think of how to get over the hurdles which lay ahead. Zooming was the obvious answer, and this platform has served us well, both formally (for Committee Meetings) and socially. We have been lucky to have, in Caroline Muir and Rajni Rijal, two ladies who have put an immense amount of time into organising all this – and teaching us how to make best use of what was, for some of us, a completely new form of communicating. Through WhatsApp we have been able to keep in touch and the way in which members of the Chat have supported, sympathised and encouraged each other has been quite remarkable. I do have two sadnesses. The first is that only a relatively small proportion of those with access to a computer, iPad or smart phone have participated – but after all, we are all entitled to our privacy and whether to be involved **was** a matter of their choice. The other is that those who do not have this kind of equipment have been, to some extent, marginalised. I had hoped that it might be possible to set up some sort of friendship links between these members and any others living nearby who could pass on information and to some extent, this has happened but, I'm afraid, only on an informal basis

With no opportunities to fundraise, other than the successful Lunar New Year Lunch organised by Dr Ibrahim, Mrs Rosina Dhala's proposal to create an E-Cookery Book, together with the production of a calendar from photographs posted on the WhatsApp Chat were our only sources of income. We are all very grateful to those concerned: Mrs Dhala herself, Dr Ibrahim and her daughter and Dr Rijal. They did an absolutely superb job of both initiatives.

It would be invidious of me to report on the year without recording the impact on TWC of the sudden deaths of Peter Gammage and Antonia Derry. As you know, Peter was in regular attendance at AGMs in the last few years, always ready to show photographs or videos from Mumbai etc. as well as keeping our website up to date. As for Antonia, I cannot begin to count how many times, in the last year, I've thought "Antonia would have known about this or that" or "Antonia would/would not have approved" etc. etc. Our deepest sympathy goes to their families and to all the families who have lost loved ones during the year.

To conclude, I think that out of the negatives of 2020 have arisen, phoenix-like, some positives – and ideas of how to move forward using the knowledge that we've gained.

Not only that but this brute of a year has shown us all that women of different nationalities, different outlooks, different priorities can all come together and work as an effective team and it has been a privilege to be part of it.