

In last year's report I concentrated on HAA's change of emphasis – towards green issues – and during the past year we have followed that line – I was going to say, with a vengeance. And that is not too strong, Bob will be recalling our mammoth cash raising effort to try to acquire Lag wood for the community. We failed, but we could not have failed more happily, as you will find out when you watch the new owners presentation. But in another sense, it was also a great success - £90.000 raised in nine days not only demonstrated in hard cash the support there was in our community but how only a small voluntary organisation can mobilise it at short notice.

It also made us think hard about HAA's role and how we can be more sensitive to the concerns and opinions of our members – and also very aware that Hassocks now has a much younger element – in-coming families with young children – in its population which we do not reach. So we bit the IT bullet (Bob and Judith did most of the biting) and we now have a data base of almost 100 members with whom we can communicate by email, and a website. Small things, but already we can see that the website, for example, is capturing the interest of a younger generation. May the day soon come when they are represented more strongly on our Executive.

Because the irony is that our current projects will, if successful, most benefit that generation. By next year, for example, mums with buggies will no longer have to hump them up and down the station steps but will use the new lifts as much as the grandparents. Catherine's presentation will show how hard and long the rail group had to work to get that and get the new station built.

The Spitalford Bridge group is coping with many of the frustrations encountered by the rail group and at the same pace: slow, very slow and dead stop. At our gloomier moments, we feel that it will be great grand children who enjoy a viewing platform and it will be a new generation of grand parents who long for a seat to rest their weary bones Bob will be giving you an update – we are, I think, say I cautiously, getting there and maybe we will see stage one, the sprucing up of the bridge itself by the end of the year.

Spitalford Bridge is a good example of our two major problems. One is financial. We need another source of funding other than members' subscriptions. You will be hearing about our idea for a Village lottery.

The other problem is manpower. The pink paper summarises our needs. To put you in the picture, the bridge project for most of the year has been bob-on-his-own. The 'green group' of volunteers who help out with green jobs throughout the village is a frail seedling. A tiny group work at the station through the Friends of Hassocks station scheme, Keymer Guides and the Wolstonbury scrub clearers are helping with the raised beds in front of the pet shop. More people are needed The green group needs some Miracle-Gro - an enthusiast willing to chivvy, cajole and inspire and provide some down to earth leadership.

So much for our main projects. During the year we have been in contact with Sussex Lantern and the good news is that their new plans for the site will not incorporate the ugly steel structure which has been such an eye sore for years. They are awaiting permission from Planning to remove it. We have attended meetings of the Parish Council's working group on parking and appreciated this opportunity to put member's views on this thorny issue - our own little survey of the roads around the station and the long term car park was one of the triggers that initiated this review. We regret that, as yet, we have had no opportunity for input into the preliminary work that the Council is undertaking regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.

Finally, In the Turner's field, the HAA seat built by the Monday Group is going to be joined by a new bird identification board. It is the work of Lindsay Cross and Bill Hobday- have a look at it, and tell us if you have any ideas on how we could reproduce it as a money raiser. Unfortunately, the field was treated with Round Up early this year, and although it has been reseeded it still resembles a blasted heath. Difficult to believe that last year flocks of corn buntings could be spotted. Lindsay's chart shows most of the birds that have been observed from 'our seat'. I'm sure, given time, they will all be seen again - but for the moment enjoy the picture.