

THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2008

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008

As the Chislehurst Society enters its 75th anniversary, and its 20th year as a charity, I am pleased to report that it does so in a state of robust health and determination. Highlights of 2008 include:

- our planning group reviewed 462 planning applications during the year, an increase of 5% over 2007, and we made representations on 20% of these
- the 2008 Alun and Joy Jones Environmental Awards attracted a record number of entries, over £1,600 of prizes were awarded to Chislehurst students and their schools
- the Society's substantial contribution to the St Nicholas Church new fence appeal enabled this important work to be completed to everyone's satisfaction

Since I became Chairman of the Society in April, I have led a review of all our activities. I want to ensure that the Chislehurst Society remains relevant to the needs and priorities of our members and all who live or work here. Our executive committee has considered what we should do to meet these needs and how we should do it, and I hope our members will be pleased with our plans for the future. In what follows, I report on what we have done in 2008 under the three headings which summarise our charitable objects, with indications of our plans for the future; I hope you will let us know your views on our priorities.



PLANNING *(To promote high standards of planning and architecture in Chislehurst)*

Planning remains one of key priorities of the Society. During 2008 our Planning subcommittee reviewed 462 applications (up 5% on the 442 applications in 2007), and made representations in 89 cases (19% of the total). 61 of these were objections, and 28 were observations (usually a comment that conformity with planning policies needs to be checked, or suggesting that certain conditions should be attached to any approval). In 2007 we made 58 objections and 35 observations (21%).



One of the most significant applications was the proposal to build a crematorium on the grounds of Kemnal Manor. This has now been withdrawn, but may reappear; we have expressed our concerns at the effect of significant development on green belt land, with loss of amenity and natural habitat in this secluded area, crossed by many footpaths.

We know that our representations to Bromley Council are taken seriously, and we take care to ensure that they are objective and appropriate. It is disappointing therefore that a number of applications that we object to are permitted. A surprising number of these involved clear breaches of Bromley's own planning policies (such as overdevelopment of sites, or adverse effects on neighbouring properties). We are pleased to see, however, that the most objectionable of applications are usually refused. Our plans for the future include closer dialogue with Bromley Planning Department so that we can better understand their plans and policies.

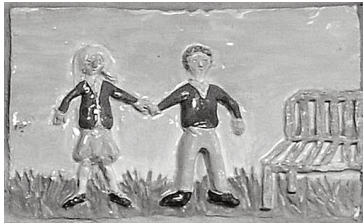
We expect the number of applications to fall during the remainder of 2009, as the effect of the financial crisis takes hold. Unfortunate though the current recession may be, it does have the local benefit of slowing the pace of development, allowing the planning system to take breath after several years of rapid growth. We are also looking forward to more local decisions on planning matters, if London Mayor Boris Johnson does indeed allow this to happen.



Founded in 1934 as the Chislehurst Ratepayer's Association, later becoming the Chislehurst Resident's Association, the Chislehurst Society acquired charitable status and adopted its present name in 1989. It is affiliated to the Civic Trust, the London Forum, the London Green Belt Council and the Campaign to Protect Rural England, among other bodies. With over 4,000 subscribing members, and over 150 volunteers working actively for it, the Chislehurst Society is believed to be one of the largest amenity groups in the country.

EDUCATION *(To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of Chislehurst)*

The Alun & Joy Jones Environmental Awards reached a new peak of interest in 2008, with over 1,200 entries from a wider range of schools. This year we dispensed with book token prizes and replaced them with cash prizes totalling over £1,600. The quality and variety of the entries was most impressive, and made for difficult decisions for the judges. Everyone had their own favourite entry; mine was the mural at Red Hill School created in memory of Jill Goldsmith (from which the images in this report are taken). Many thanks to Donna Bompas and her team for once again making this award so successful.



I made it an early priority to visit the head teachers of our local schools, since I believe that the Society and schools can work together for the benefit of us all. We had a first meeting of the Chislehurst Schools Forum in November, and agreed to work on a number of ideas, which we will report on during the coming year. Fourteen schools are now affiliated with the Society.

Our two social evenings were, as usual, fully subscribed, and combined an enjoyable social evening and supper with fine talks on Chislehurst's interesting history. John Mercer spoke on the life of Napoleon III, an appropriate subject in the last French Emperor's bi-centenary. In October Brian Williamson gave us a history of the Chislehurst caves. An additional event at very short notice was the visit to Chislehurst of David Prerau, from Boston Massachusetts. David is the author of a book about the history of Daylight Saving, which was first proposed (and adopted by the British government as British Summer Time) by Chislehurst resident and builder William Willett. David was surprised how little public acknowledgement there is here of Willett's achievements.

Roy Hopper continued to be prolific in his role as the Society's local historian. He gave 15 talks during 2008, including two on Napoleon III. Roy responded to 13 enquiries from members of the public, most of which can now be viewed on our website, and he edited the two *Cockpits* that we published in 2008, which featured a range of fascinating articles. With the explosion of interest in family history, we increased the historical content on our website of relevance to researchers, and will continue to do so in 2009.

CONSERVATION *(To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic, environmental or public interest in Chislehurst)*

I am disappointed that there are not more applications for financial support from the Society. We have the funds to do more, and would welcome more requests for help. I was pleased that we were able to make a substantial contribution to the replacement fence around St Nicholas Church, restoring the old style of fencing, and enhancing this part of the commons, but we were not inundated with requests for help. Willow Wildlife Trust received a grant towards the running costs of their invaluable service to Chislehurst, and we hope to make this a regular grant.



The Society organised a number of clean-up events throughout the year that were supported by an enthusiastic group of volunteers. Although graffiti now appears to be under control, litter on the Commons remains a nuisance and an irritant to residents and visitors alike. Watch out for details of forthcoming events!

Traffic and transport remain among the most important issues for Chislehurst residents. The Society continues to be represented on the Bromley Road Safety Consultative Panel, and we take an active part in the public consultation process for road traffic safety schemes. Following two tragic accidents in Elmstead Lane, we have acted in support of the concerns raised by local resident members and schools. We are reviewing our Traffic and Transport subcommittee's work, and plan to take a more proactive role in future, working with Bromley Council on their future plans before decisions are made.



The Society continued its active participation in Chislehurst policing through our involvement in both the Chislehurst Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel and its equivalent in Mottingham, which meet every six weeks. The Ward priorities can be viewed on our website. Sgt Joe Mooney left Chislehurst Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) early in 2009, and the Team is now led by Sgt Karen Hunter, to whom we all extend a warm welcome. I would like to thank Joe for doing so much for Chislehurst, and we all wish him well in his future career with the Metropolitan Police.

I congratulate the Chislehurst Team for their success in making Chislehurst a safer place to live. The Chislehurst SNT Ward Panel AGM is to be held on 22 April 2009 at the Red Cross Hall, and new members would be very welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

At long last, after ten years of decline in membership, our numbers increased slightly in 2008, and now stand at 4,066. I don't pretend that we have solved the problems of maintaining membership numbers when the population of Chislehurst continues to be increasingly transient, but I am confident that the initiatives we are taking to increase our relevance to today's residents will enable us to recruit more new members.

During 2008 the Committee undertook a review of the Society's communications to members, following on from the upgrade of the website. The updated *Chislehurst Report* will now be published quarterly.



Our Road Stewards are the backbone of our Society, and I would like to thank them for the hard work they put in to maintaining our membership numbers, and delivering our publications. Without their help it would be difficult to maintain the direct contact we have with members, and our running costs would be much higher. During the year 8 Road Stewards retired, but I am pleased to say that 13 were recruited, taking our number to 136, giving us greater coverage of our members.

Two Saturday morning events were organised for Road Stewards during the year at the Chislehurst Active Age Centre. John Harvey of the Bromley Road Safety Consultative Panel and Matthew Nunn from Bromley Planning Department gave up their Saturday mornings to talk to Road Stewards and answer their questions. We had a full house on both occasions with plenty of discussion, and we plan to continue these events through 2009.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Despite the recession and financial crisis the Chislehurst Society's finances remain robust. The accounts are attached to this report. The main features for the year were as follows.

- Our income in 2008 was slightly lower than the previous year, as a result of fewer sales of the DVD and *Discover Chislehurst*. Our charitable grants were also lower. We ended the year with a revenue surplus of over £24,000, but the market value of our investments was down by £71,000.
- As interest rates fell, our Investment subcommittee acted to reduce our deposits and transfer funds into the COIF Fixed Interest Fund and Investment Fund. This will enable us to achieve a higher level of income during 2009 than we would obtain from our deposit account, and position us to achieve capital growth from the present depressed levels.

2009 - OUR 75th ANNIVERSARY

As we enter our 75th anniversary we can reflect with pride on the initiatives taken by our colleagues past and present in working to keep Chislehurst special. We should congratulate those whose hard work and inspiration have enabled us to retain many of the important features of Chislehurst which are so valuable to us today. We cannot possibly thank everyone, but at this year's AGM, we will be presenting the first Chislehurst Society Awards to just a few local volunteers who have done, and continue to do, so much for us. We hope that you will come along to congratulate the winners of these awards with us.

We also want to celebrate Chislehurst and showcase the many activities and interests there are in our community. We are organising a Chislehurst Festival, starting on 19 September, as part of our anniversary, and hope that you will find plenty of interesting events in and around our wonderful buildings and commons during the two weeks of celebration.



2008 has been a year of drama and change for all of us, and I would like to thank all our volunteers for continuing to support the Society and the important work we do. I particularly want to mention the members of the executive committee, who work tirelessly and voluntarily for the Society and its members, and without whom none of what I have described above would have happened. They have been particularly supportive and helpful to me during this my first year as Chairman, and I would like to thank them personally for their work during the year.

Tony Allen
Chairman, The Chislehurst Society

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2008

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY is a Registered Charity, No 298413, with its principal address at PO Box 82, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5TT and is established under a Constitution adopted in February 1989.

Trustees (and members of the executive committee) during 2008 and to the date of this report are:

Tony Allen (Chairman from April)	Christine Barrett	Keith Heselden
Lesley Pullar (Vice-Chairman from April)	Terry Baskett	Roy Hopper
Sue Thorogood (Secretary)	Ken Chapman	Bruce Hurn
Colin Saxby (Treasurer)	Nicolette Comport	Tony McClarty
	Frances Follin	Reginald Parry

The four Officers (listed) relinquish their office every year but are eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting; one half of the other (longest serving) members retire at the AGM, and are also eligible for re-election.

The custodian trustees for the access drive are Messrs Chapman, Parry, Saxby and Tony Turner (see Note in the Accounts).

OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Society's objects are to promote high standards of planning and architecture in Chislehurst, to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of Chislehurst; and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic, environmental or public interest in Chislehurst.

Investigation of local planning applications (as well as proposed road traffic schemes and speed restrictions) and making representations to the London Borough of Bromley remains a central activity for the Society. Our website has been revamped, with Society news regularly updated. Education and concern about the local environment is encouraged by our regular talks; and we aim to improve this education brief by a redesign of our regular publications to raise their appeal. The Society remains involved with local policing and graffiti clean-up.

Our annual competition for students, the Jones Environmental Awards, attracted over 1,200 entries with prizewinners sharing £1,630. The Society again supported the local Big Draw event. Closer links with local schools are also being forged via a Schools Forum aimed at co-operation between the Society and schools in areas of benefit for local residents.

We look forward to celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Society (originally under a different name) in 2009. As part of the celebration, a Chislehurst Festival is planned which will include local participation in the London Open House initiative.

Grant making totalled £12,911, the principal contribution of £10,000 being to St Nicholas Church to complete their churchyard fence renewal - to its original historic design. We welcome requests to help local good causes consistent with the Society's objectives. Further details of grants and affiliations are noted in the Accounts.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Society did not escape the financial turmoil of 2008. With the likelihood of even lower deposit interest rates we have substantially reduced our deposits; we have reinvested into the COIF Fixed Interest Fund and are also increasing our holding in their Investment Fund - by 'drip-feeding' over 12 months. This should produce a higher income than deposits, and in a few months our portfolio will be better balanced. In the longer term we hope capital values will increase as the economy comes out of recession. Like the Investment Fund, the Fixed Interest Fund is a unit trust invested in a mixture of government securities (at least 60% by value) and investment grade company bonds. Subscription income was maintained in 2008.

Reserves policy: A combination of increased costs and reduced income has necessitated an increase in general fund income. This was achieved by increasing that fund by £30,000, by transfers from our designated funds. Uncommitted funds are required as a buffer against any unanticipated interruption of subscriptions, variations in cash flow and the possibility of lower company dividends and deposit interest.

This Report was approved by the Trustees on 18 March 2009 and signed on their behalf by:

A.S. Allen, Chairman

S.E. Thorogood, Secretary

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31 December 2008

	2008	2007
	£	£
Receipts		
<i>Voluntary</i>		
Members' subscriptions & donations	10,285	9,813
Tax reclaimed	1,071	1,066
Investment income (deposits & investments)	42,348	41,239
<i>Charitable activities</i>		
Promotional sales	2,648	7,473
Cultural social events	2,486	2,643
Total	£58,838	£62,234

Revenue surplus	24,227	540
Unrealised gains (losses) on investments	(71,341)	5,561
Accumulated funds brought fwd (note 1)	879,310	873,209
Accumulated funds carried fwd	£832,106	£879,310

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31 December 2008

Cash and short term deposits	341,020
Debtors	975
Investments at mkt value, 31.12.08 (note 2)	490,143
Heritage property (note 3)	nil
Liabilities	(32)
Total	£832,106

The funds of the Society are all unrestricted and include funds designated for particular purposes:

<i>General fund</i>	142,130
<i>Designated funds (note 4):</i>	
Grants fund	611,610
Environmental Contingency fund	45,979
Premises fund	32,387
Total	£832,106

Grants and affiliation fees

These totalled £12,911 to local bodies in furtherance of the Society's charitable activities:

St Nicholas Church PCC	£ 10,000
Willow Wildlife Rescue	1,500
The Big Draw	750
National Trust (Petts Wood and Hawkwood Committee)	250

These accounts have received an unqualified report from the Independent Examiner, a copy of which is available from the Society.

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 18 March 2009, and signed on their behalf by:

A.S.Allen, Chairman

C. Saxby, Treasurer

	2008	2007
	£	£
Payments		
<i>Costs of generating income</i>		
Voluntary income	1,350	1,042
<i>Charitable activities</i>		
Grants to third parties	12,911	27,064
Planning/conservation/environment	6,444	13,786
Publication & local study	4,870	11,537
Cultural socials	3,255	3,215
Jones Environmental Awards	2,505	2,094
Governance costs	3,276	2,956
Total	£34,611	£61,694

Notes:

1. The 2007 comparative has been adjusted due to change from accrual accounting to receipts & payments in 2008

2. Investments are represented by holdings in COIF Fixed Interest and Investment Fund Income Units

3. This freehold access drive off Lubbock Road, Chislehurst is being retained indefinitely for environmental reasons: to enable enforcement of a covenant restricting development to one dwelling on land previously owned by the Society. With no cost available and valuation methods lacking reliability, the Trustees place no value on it.

4. Grants fund for grants made for local environmental purposes and the Jones Awards; the Environmental Contingency Fund to meet the cost of challenging any major threat to the local environment; and Premises Fund for set up costs of possible future premises for the Society.

THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2009
7.30pm in the School Hall
Red Hill School, Red Hill, Chislehurst

AGENDA

1. Reception with refreshments
2. Introduction by Chairman
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 22 April 2008
5. Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2008
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of Executive Committee
9. Presentation of Chislehurst Society Awards, 2009
10. Open Discussion on topics raised by the Annual Report, and other topics of current concern

Officers, and approximately one half of the executive committee, are elected annually. Under the Charities Act 1993, persons elected are required to be acceptable as trustees. Nominations to serve as officers or members of the executive committee should be made in accordance with the Constitution of the Society. It is convenient, but not essential, for nominations to be made on the forms available. These may be obtained from the Secretary, PO Box 82, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5TT.

*For further information, telephone our answerphone service: 020 8467 0900
e-mail: members@chislehurst-society.org.uk*

Copies of any of these documents, and the Independent Examiner's Report, are available on our website: www.chislehurst-society.org.uk

The Chislehurst Society is a Registered Charity, No. 298413, and is affiliated to the Civic Trust.