

Alvechurch Village Society

Celebrating

50

*YEARS
OF AVS*

**Annual Report
March 2019**

www.alvechurchvs.org.uk





Alvechurch Village Society
The Committee present; its forty-ninth Annual Report,
informing members of its activities from January to December 2018

Affiliations: British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV),
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

2018 - 2019



Officers:-

President	Andy Humphries
Vice President	Forest Hansen
Chairman	Grace Hampson
Vice Chairman	Ray Yarnell
Secretary	Sarah Courbet
Treasurer	Caroline French
Independent Examiner	Keith Rixon

Committees:-

Parish Paths Warden	Adrian Smith
Programme Secretary	Ray Yarnell
Representing Hopwood Residents Association	Adrian Smith
AVS Village Hall Representative	Norma Divine
Member	Eileen McHugh
Member	Sheila Parsons
Member	Nickie Thomas
Member	Keith Williams
Member	Martin Clarke

Past Presidents:-

Sir Michael Higgs D.L.	Mr. Peter Merry
Sir Patrick Lawrence	Mr. J F Milward D.L
Mr. L C Boardman	Dr. N J Cartwright D.Sc.,Ph.D
Mr. F C Ott, D.S.C	Professor R Davies
Mr. James Burton	Mr. Antony Sealey
Mr. Michael Scanlan	Ms. Julie Kirkbride
Mr. John Sidwell	Mr. Philip Aubury
Ms Joanne Malin	

Report Covers

Front: A view of St. Laurence Churchyard.

Chairman's Report

Alvechurch Village Society has had yet another busy year as we strive to offer the village a range of activities and events, which are enjoyed and relevant to everyone living locally. Importantly we also aim to respond to issues of importance, which affect the village and its surrounding areas both now and into the future. In an important anniversary year for us, we seek to remain a valued group within the village and are delighted to have recruited 21 new members in 2018. We shall continue to seek new members especially those moving into our delightful area for the first time.

In January 2019 a referendum for residents of Alvechurch was held to determine if the Neighbourhood Plan should be accepted. Alvechurch Parish Council had developed this over several years in active consultation and involvement with local residents and businesses. Our own past Chairman, Adrian Smith, led this lengthy and arduous piece of work. Of those who voted, 97% were in favour of acceptance. This is a key document, which will serve to underpin planning decisions for our village in future. The Society was pleased to support the Plan which stressed the importance of future planning decisions being made with emphasis on retaining the character of the village whilst accepting the need to provide affordable housing and essential facilities to support this, in a way which is sympathetic to the beautiful environment in which we live.

As we go to print there is uncertainty about the future of the library in Alvechurch and the County Council is consulting on proposals to effectively down grade the library with potential loss of staff. We are opposed to the proposed change and wish to continue to enjoy this wonderful facility, which is so well used by local people. Similarly there is continued uncertainty in relation to the future of the much-needed post office, since the rejection of a planning application by Simply Fresh to open a store in the village, which would include post office facilities.

We changed the format of our events programme this year to provide fewer evening talks and more social events, which attract greater numbers. We also decided we wished to support other groups in the village by encouraging our members to attend their events, such as the Concert for Peace organised by Alvechurch Community Choir and the Pantomime in the Village Hall by Alvechurch Amateur Dramatic Society. We have enjoyed summer and Christmas social events as well as our ever-popular quiz. Sincere thanks go to Ray and Norma Yarnell for all their work in providing us with such fun and entertainment. We are so grateful for all their hard work. Proceeds from the events have gone to support the Lounge and its facilities for young people, the village hall as well as our own endeavours in improving the village.

In our aim to provide something of interest especially to younger families, this year we repeated the walking treasure hunt in summer. Unfortunately it coincided with a key match for England in the World Cup and so attendance was not as great as we would have liked.

However those who did come along greatly enjoyed the

evening, which conveniently ended up at the Weighbridge pub, where refreshing drinks were enjoyed as the answers were confirmed. We also introduced a new event – the best dressed house competition for Halloween. We were delighted to award first place to Lucy Aubury and family in Latimer Road with the children of Alvechurch & Bordesley Nursery School at Station House, runners up.

We were pleased to meet residents at the successful Picnic in the Park event and used the occasion to reflect on the countryside, which surrounds us. Our walks leaflets had been reprinted and for sale and we were successful in attracting new members from the event.

Our guided walks programme on the first Sunday of each month continues to grow in popularity as they vary in both activity levels and location. In recent years they have gone to areas slightly further afield than the immediate parish boundaries. Sincere thanks go to Adrian Smith for organising these for us and also to various walk leaders who volunteer to lead each month.

The brilliant footpaths team of volunteers continue to keep public footpaths in and around Alvechurch in good order. They meet fortnightly on Saturday mornings from March - October each year and do a great job whilst having fun as they do so. Many thanks to Adrian Smith and everyone involved for the brilliant work they do. It is much appreciated by everyone who ventures onto the public footpath network and we are so fortunate to have them working for us.

In a similar vein, our twice-yearly litter picks are now well established. The spring event was very well supported by residents of all ages including children although the awful weather in autumn was disappointing but still saw some volunteers bravely battle the elements to clear unsightly litter from our roadsides and around the village. Thank you to Sheila Parsons for organising these for us. We hope you will join us for the next event on Sunday 14th April 2019 at 10.30am – you will be made very welcome.

The Facebook page is no longer administered by the Society. Sarah Courbet resigned from her role as secretary this year and took the decision to rename the page and continue to administer it as a stand-alone site. We are pleased that AVS took the initiative to set it up and that it has been so successful in offering residents a useful service. We shall continue to advertise our events there and are pleased that it will continue as a separate entity.

This year is a special year as we celebrate our 50th anniversary. We are planning a special event on 26th June 2019 at the Village Hall. More details will be available in the near future and we hope you will join us for this special occasion when Dellow cars will be joining us to help with the celebrations. To mark the occasion we have also planted more daffodil bulbs around the village and so we hope you will all enjoy more vibrant spring flowers in areas not previously planted.

Finally I would like to thank the committee members, all of whom contribute so much throughout the year. I am particularly grateful for their support as I reach the end of my three-year tenure as Chairperson of the Society. It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve in the role.

Planning and Other Local Parish Council Issues

Dear readers, development has been quiet since the building of the new housing complex at Rectory Gardens and Alvechurch Village Society extends a warm welcome to all those new residents living there.

That's not to say we have no more news on the planning subject. We have now got a fully adopted legally binding Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as the result of our residents showing great support for it by 96.7% of them voting "Yes" (who are those 3.3% who said No?).

As chairman of the NP steering Group I can only say, "It's a great achievement by all those volunteers who have worked with me on it over the last 6 years" or so. It's the first ever Neighbourhood Plan to be legally adopted into the planning system for the District of Bromsgrove, and we thank all those who voted "Yes" to make it our own planning document that will decide on the suitability of planning applications for our area.

That's not to say new development won't be coming along for Alvechurch Parish, but at least we will have the first crack at it to make sure it fits in with the needs of our community.

There are still consultations at the Parish Council on the status of; The Library, the Post office, and the Alvechurch Station Car Park.

ALVECHURCH LIBRARY FUTURES

The Parish Council has formed a working group to discuss the future of our library with the County Library Service at Worcester. The group has Parish, District and County Councillors on it, former Library staff, representatives of our neighbouring Parishes (Barnt Green and Cofton Hackett) and key personnel from our local schools. High building rental costs from the PFI arrangement are a major barrier to financial support being given by local organisations. A meeting with school representatives is scheduled for February to look at the flexibility of the current PFI arrangements, and the working group as a whole will then look at future options. APC is already grateful for advice received from former staffs of the County Library Service, who live in the Alvechurch area.

THE POST OFFICE

In the autumn last year a planning application by Simply Fresh was turned down on appeal; APC is continuing to liaise with the Post Office about the implications for a future Post Office and a location for it in the village centre. It means, continue to watch this space I'm afraid.

ALVECHURCH RAIL STATION CAR PARK

The appalling state of Alvechurch station car park has caused inconvenience and misery for Alvechurch residents and rail users since the new station platforms were completed in 2015. It is considered unsafe because

now because of the deep pot holes and standing water, also known as the Alvechurch Lake, plus it does not make best use of the land area which is leading to Station Road and the surrounding roads being overburdened by on street parking. Local residents are regularly finding their drives obstructed or have their own cars blocked in. Station road has now become a dangerous road to drive down on weekdays, as station user cars, parked nose to tail make passing very unclear for oncoming motorists and other road users.

Another issue and probably of most concern because the car park is unsurfaced, is that there are no marked bays or bays specifically designated for disabled users, making the station virtually impossible to access for those people with mobility issues.

Network Rail says the initial project "went over budget". Well I'm afraid that's not Alvechurch's fault... and since then they have declared profits of £483m in their 2017 annual report. They have failed the people of Alvechurch and failed to deliver on what was a clear requirement as stated in their original planning consent.

The Parish Council are in continuous conversation and meetings with Network Rail and have approached their Chief Executive Officer and the rail franchise holders to seek a solution, yet the impasse still goes on!

HOPWOOD

Hopwood proposed playing fields

A grant of £10,000 from Big Lottery Fund (BLF) has been received on an application by the Parish Council and a group of Hopwood "mums" to improve the playing facilities for the Hopwood Community field. All the money has been raised towards the expected £30,000 cost of improving play equipment at Hopwood. The Parish Council has agreed to underwrite any funding shortfall, the project will go out for tender in the Summer or Autumn.

Alongside the play scheme, we at the Parish Council still press County Highways for a pedestrian crossing in Hopwood which would allow parents and children, who live in Ash Lane and the lower Hopwood area, to get across the extremely busy A441 and especially for children to be able to safely access any newly approved play facilities .

WEATHEROAK

The issue of speeding around Weatheroak Hill still continues, and the Parish Council is trying to find an alternative lengthsmen service, which may include the use of Bromsgrove District council work men, to be able to re-site or re-position the mobile Vehicle Activated Speed unit to show speeding cars that there is a speed limit around the Weatheroak area.

Cllr. Adrian Smith
Chairman of Alvechurch Parish
Neighbourhood Plan

Alvechurch Village Hall Report

2019 has started with some good news for the Hall as we have now secured planning permission for the ramp! Work will now start in earnest to secure funding from various sources for this long-awaited project.

Our new Hall Manager Julie Warrender also took up the reins this year and she has moved seamlessly into the position. It has not been easy as the Hall has been fraught with problems concerning the heating and the emergency lighting – but all has been resolved now. One of the best improvements this year has been the provision of a large shed outside to house several chairs and the tables which previously took up too much space in the entrance hall of this.

The weather vane which had been tilting precariously has now been taken down so that the fixing could be made good. Ray Yarnell took advantage of this circumstance to give it some much needed TLC and you may have seen him up on the roof with David Scriven putting the weather vane securely back in position! Not for the faint hearted.

In order to accommodate more groups, the dressing rooms either side of the stage are being used as music rooms and are proving a success. It is therefore our intention to decorate and carpet them soon.

The Village Hall Committee are working hard to maintain the Hall and make it more attractive. You may have noticed the displays of artwork in the main hall provided by the Art Group, these displays will be extended to the lower committee room in the very near future.

The Hall will also be hosting many special events this year, not only is the Hall 90 years old in May but the Alvechurch W.I. will also be 90 years old and they held their first meeting in the Hall on 6th May 1929. The Village Society will be a mere 50 years old on 25th June 2019 and we are planning an Anniversary Party on Wednesday 26th June 2019 at the Hall and Dellow Cars have agreed to come along on this evening with some of their cars to help us celebrate.

Norma Divine



Pathways Report

Venturing into the Alvechurch Parish countryside is always a pleasure, especially so when it becomes almost a social outing, as is the case with our monthly AVS walks which are becoming more popular as the years pass by.



Our walks are made even better through the efforts of the AVS Footpath Group. The team keep most of our Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in tip top condition through fortnightly work outings on Saturday mornings throughout the spring and summer, ending in the occasional well deserved pint.



This year we worked on 32 paths (including building and repairing stiles and bridges, strimming and signposting. There were a total of 112 member attendances and together they worked a total of 252 hours. Yet again 2018 saw a brilliant effort again by all members of the footpath group: a team of which I'm especially proud of, being the Parish Footpath Warden who leads them.



Over the Years AVS has become known by other rambling groups as having some of the best kept pathways in the County. AVS should be proud of this, a great tribute to the Society and their Footpath Group and welcomed now that we are in our celebratory 50th year.

Adrian Smith
Parish Footpath Warden

Alvechurch Village Society

50 years in the life of a village.

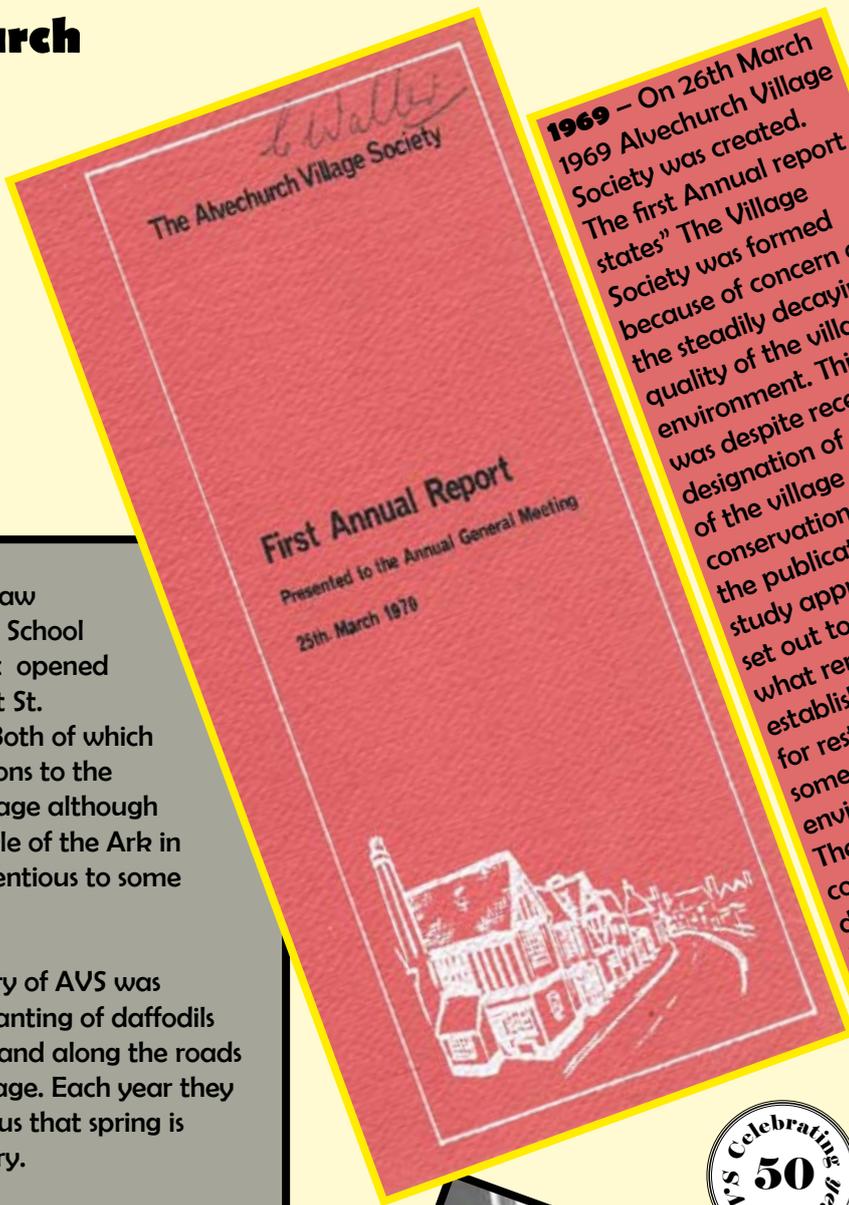
2009- The village saw the new Alvechurch School and library complex opened as well as the Ark at St. Laurence Church. Both of which are welcome additions to the amenities of the village although the architectural style of the Ark in particular was contentious to some residents.

The 40th anniversary of AVS was marked with the planting of daffodils around the village and along the roads leading into the village. Each year they continue to remind us that spring is arriving in all its glory.

The first PACT meeting was held, a partnership of police and councils with community groups which aimed to resolve local issues such as antisocial behaviour and traffic problems

Work to improve the precinct by resurfacing and planting of trees and shrubs was agreed

Beating the Bound was repeated – an ancient Rogation-tide custom of walking the boundaries of the parish. 26 walkers completed the 17 mile walk in 10 hours.



1969 – On 26th March 1969 Alvechurch Village Society was created. The first Annual report states "The Village Society was formed because of concern over the steadily decaying quality of the village environment. This was despite recent designation of part of the village as a conservation area and the publication of a study appraisal, which set out to protecting what remained and establishing guidelines for restoration of some of its former environmental quality. There were early concerns at the demolition of character buildings in the centre of the village and replacement with 60s style. The proposed housing development behind Callow Hill Road gave concern as did proposals for a M1-M5 link road- the M42.

Celebrating Success and

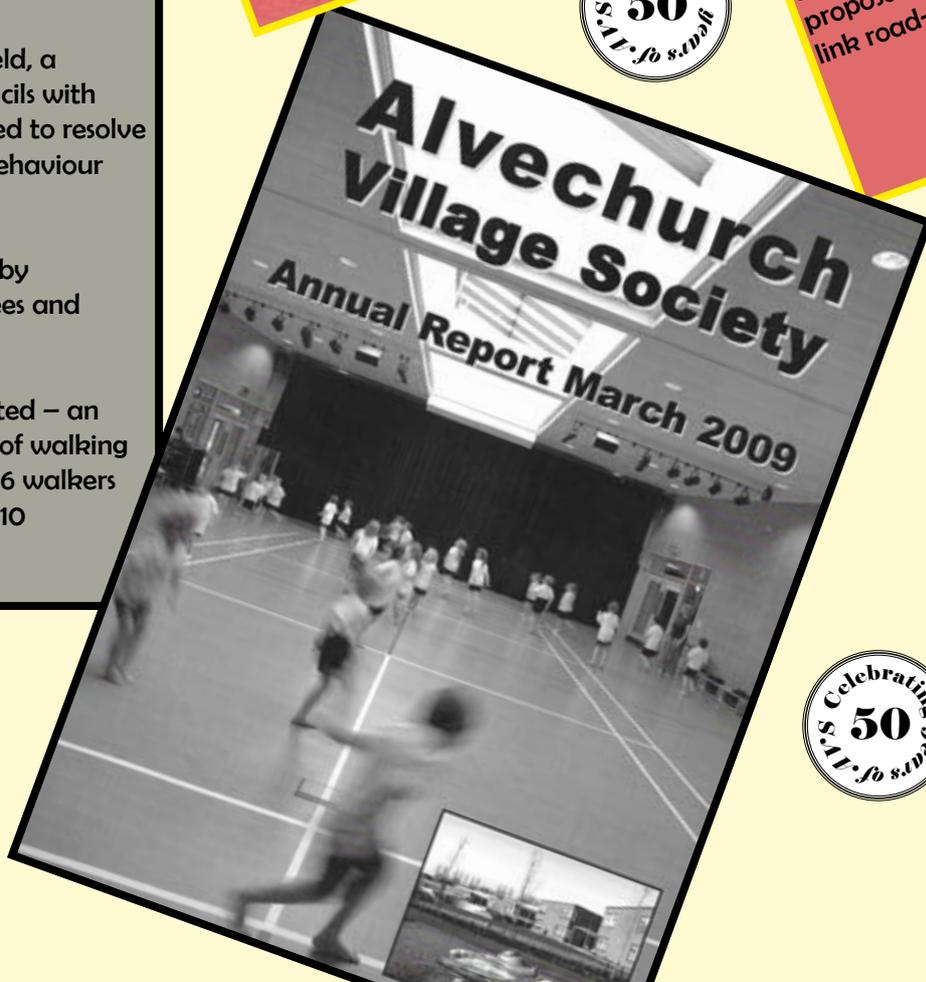


50 years of monthly guided area have been organised for
50 years of talks and so members have given great and pleasure

50 years of the Volunteer team conserving our public footpaths making envy of many parishes

50 years of campaigns to conserve the character and environment of the village

50 years of action to improve the village and surrounding areas by litter clearance and planting trees and plants



1999- The Bygreen belt land the owners provided. Whilst the Bygreen this has resulted in improved safety. A Re-Appraisal was published. Traffic at Hop Piggery at Hop 'Alvechurch A



Volunteering

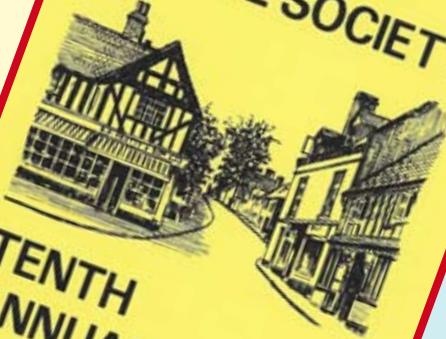
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1979-
10 years
on and the Society
is still fighting an appeal
against a government decision
to approve the construction of
the motorway. A complaint to
the Ombudsman resulted in
the Dept of Environment found
guilty of maladministration as
it had refused to recognise the
right of the Action group to
demand a Public Enquiry and
to have its legal costs paid. A
Public Enquiry was held but
the Government wins the day
and construction commences
The Society prioritises the
planting of trees in suitable
locations in the village.

THE ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY



TENTH ANNUAL REPORT
Presented to the Annual General Meeting
28th MARCH 1979

1989

- Motorway construction is complete and the fight for a bypass for the village succeeds. The Chairman is concerned at the desire of both Redditch and Birmingham Councils to extend their boundaries with a potential impact for Alvechurch. The amount of traffic going through the village and the growing problem of litter are major concerns. Rowney Green Association is formed and the Parish Council arranges a 'Beating the Bounds' to uphold a tradition in confirming the Parish Boundary by walking the full extent of the boundaries.



THE ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY



**TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT
PRESENTED TO THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
22nd MARCH 1989**



bypass had opened. Despite the Society opposing the proposed use of
and to create a motorway services area at Hopwood, it went ahead with
providing £10,000 for traffic calming measures in the village.
bypass has reduced the amount of traffic going through the village,
led in more problems with speed and so traffic calming measures to
ty were introduced (pinch points at the Swan Inn and Cricket Club).
al, of the original environmental Village Appraisal document in 1969,
d.

owood and Bordesley are now a real concern as is the impact of the
opwood.

'light' was celebrated once again with it's array of lanterns.



The Alvechurch Village Society

Thirtieth Annual Report

Presented to the Annual General Meeting

24th March 1999

Talks/Events Programme Review 2017/2018

JANUARY 2018

THE BIG NEW YEAR QUIZ

The January Quiz constantly draws people into an AVS event, that years ago first appeared as a possibility for the annual programme and has now become an annual event for the village.

Norma and I now have an extended team of helpers and quiz writers with Sue and Dave (who are always on holiday on the night) as well as Louise and Geoff who have taken the marking task up a gear with the aid of their laptop and spreadsheet skills.

Eileen's raffle team also helped towards raising £233 in total as a donation to the Village Hall, and with no question controversy looming, all in all it was a very enjoyable evening.

APRIL 2018

SPRING SUPPER EVENING AT THE WEIGHBRIDGE

These evenings are proving even more popular, but we were looking for an alternative form of entertainment to mini quiz's and Tony's musical bingo.

The conclusion was to have a "Play your cards right" evening, which was a great choice with lots of prizes but nobody wanting to be a "dolly dealer". Jayne the landlady provided a wonderful supper and everyone decided this event should become a regular item.

MAY 2018

WEATHEROAK HILL BREWERY TOUR

We chose this event at the Coach and Horses as a Summer event that might appeal to a lot of AVS members, as well as being an indoor event if the weather was not that good.

We had the maximum number that Rob the brewer could handle in one group and it was really interesting discovering that such a lot of activity occurs in the small building that we all pass as you go through the village.

I should have said finally that everyone enjoyed the food and the beer!

FEBRUARY 2018

ALVECHURCH IN PHOTOGRAPHS

This evening talk was a replacement for the wildlife talk advertised in the programme and only demonstrated what a creative lot we are in AVS and the village as a whole.

With the kind permission of Phil Thomas (The Alvechurch Amateur Weatherman) and the NGS Alvechurch Gardens, we showed a wonderful collection of weather, wildlife and garden photos that had been taken around Alvechurch.

In addition, we also shared some interesting and amusing photos taken by the AVS footpaths team and the walking group, with everyone enjoying this alternative evening.

OCTOBER 2018

SHETLAND TO SCILLY - BIRDWATCHING

This talk by local wildlife photographer Ashley Grove was requested by a lot of people who had missed having a similar talk in February.

The event was well attended as Ashley has an event website that is shared by the local RSPB etc. Ashley not only showed us an extensive range of wildlife photos, but took us through his personal career history of wildlife photography.

NOVEMBER 2018

OUTSIDE EVENT DAFFODIL BULB PLANTING

You will have noticed from last year's programme, that we are trying to promote other village events in our calendar and therefore not compete for attendance.

November was one of these months and a bright idea by one committee member to do something special for the AVS 50th anniversary in 2019, meant that a bunch of volunteers could do something else instead.

Over several days / weekends, two 50lb sacks of Golden Harvest and King Alfred daffodils were planted in various new locations throughout the village. Look out for them at :

- Meadow Lane (by Clayton Fern's)

MARCH 2018

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The President Andy Humphries welcomed everyone present to the AGM.

Grace Hampson, our Chairperson described how AVS had sadly lost two of its founder members in the last year, namely Lorna Sage and Jim Parker who had both put so much into our village and society over the years.

Grace described AVS activity for 2017.

The AGM was overseen by the President Andy Humphries, who was presented with a gift of a plant as a thank you for all his hard work and efforts towards AVS.

The committee was re elected as in the minutes, and the President and Chairperson thanked committee members as a whole and individuals for their efforts during the year.

Grace concluded the meeting with any questions and discussion, followed by informal conversation with Wine / soft drinks and nibbles.

- Rectory Lane Bus stop/ allotments
- Althestan Close entrance
- Roberts Corner roundabout roadsigns
- Callow Hill motorway bridge
- Callow Hill canal bridge
- Bench at bottom of Withybed Lane
- Circle of bulbs around the tree at the parish office
- Post boxes Withybed Lane and Station Rd

Native daffodil bulbs in some quantity were also planted in the station embankment to match the existing show in Spring.

In addition, the Station Triangle that has been cultivated over the past couple of years, will receive some more wild flower seed, so watch this space for 2019

The AVS Walks Outings

Our walks not only use all our 28 miles of PRoW's, but of late and in recent years our walks outings have gone further afield. Walks have even taken in; the Birmingham Canal Basin, Redditch Town, Hanbury, Eade's Meadow,



Romsley, Studley, Inkberrow, Clent and Waseley Hills and Lickey Hills parks. A couple of walks have been Treasure Hunts, with devilishly "easy" clues (not!), the infamous Charlie Simmonds' Mystery tours where everyone comes back in the dark and the eponymous end of season walks in July finishing at some local hostelry for a final social drink....before it all starts again in September.



DECEMBER 2018

XMAS SKITTLES EVENING

In recent years we have changed the Xmas party theme from a full blown event in the village hall, to more smaller events at the Weighbridge due to uncertainty of numbers.

This year we hired a full scale skittles alley and reverted back to the village hall, for an evening of entertainment with a fish and chip supper included.

Having never organized a skittles evening before, the rules were announced (made up!) as the evening went on and it proved to be a good evening for future programmes.



I have been arranging these walks now since I finished my stint as Chairman of the Society over 7 years ago. I can truthfully say it's a pleasure to be involved with the walks programme as so many members, and some none members, have supported me by volunteering to lead one of our walks. I won't make a list of names here to thank those who have led a walk this year as you



all know who they are by looking at your twice yearly delivered programme. All this for just a tenner!

I'd just urge everyone who enjoys our walks or Footpath



Group outings to encourage their friends or relatives to join in and perhaps lead one of the walks or come out on a Saturday morning with the Footpath Group in the future, or to join the Village Society if not already a member.

So congratulations to the Alvechurch Village Society, existing for over 50 years and continuing to make Alvechurch Parish a much better place to live in.

Adrian Smith

Alvechurch Parish Footpath Warden.

Alvechurch Village Society

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31st December 2018

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	
Balance B/Fwd	3102.49		2806.81
Income			
Subscriptions received	1352.00	1128.00	
Donations	100.00	0.00	
Sale of Publications	52.00	40.00	
Miscellaneous	313.75	455.00	
Christmas Party	594.00	588.00	
Talk Fees	19.00	88.00	
	<u>2430.75</u>		<u>2299.00</u>
Expenditure			
Administration Expenses	161.37	42.91	
Room Hire	311.00	267.50	
Speaker fees	85.00	105.00	
Publicity	390.50	227.00	
Subscriptions	36.00	36.00	
Donations	303.85	225.00	
Christmas Party expenses	493.40	364.44	
Miscellaneous	971.38	735.47	
	<u>2752.50</u>		<u>2003.32</u>
Excess/Deficit of Income over Expenditure	-321.75	295.58	
Balance carried forward	<u>2780.74</u>		<u>3102.49</u>
Current account	2780.74	3202.49	
Less: Cheques not presented	0.00	100.00	
	<u>2780.74</u>	<u>3102.49</u>	

Finance Report

We were lucky to start the year with a surplus of £295.58 of income against expenditure from the 2017 financial year. A donation of £100.00 was received from the estate of the late Jim Parker, who was a longstanding member of AVS and the Committee. There was an overall income rise of £111.75 compared to the 2017 financial year. The income from the subscriptions increased by £224.00 with four members not renewing their membership and twenty one new members joining. The miscellaneous income decreased by £141.25 and there was a slight reduction in the talk fees income.

The overall expenditure also increased by £749.18 in comparison to the 2017 financial year. In all areas of expenditure there was an increase. Administration fees increased by £118.46 and that was due to the purchase of poster board, pouches and envelopes. Publicity increased by £163.50 due to printing of walks leaflets that were not printed in the previous year. This expenditure will be recouped in due course as the leaflets are sold. The expenses of the Christmas party increased by £128.96 with comparison to the 2017 financial year.

The miscellaneous expenses saw a large increase of £539.76. This was down to the purchase of polo shirts, caps and a strimmer for footpath volunteers, children's high viz jackets to aid the health and safety of volunteers on litter picking events. There was also purchases of drills for the footpaths team and flower bulbs to plant as part of our 50th anniversary celebration. All of these purchases will benefit the village in some way.

The balance as at the year end is reduced compared to 2017. There was therefore a deficit of £321.75 of expenditure against income for the financial year ending 31st December 2018 although there remains a healthy reserve.

Caroline French, Treasurer

Auditor's Report

I confirm that I have audited the books of AVS and that they are correct as at 31/12/2018.

Keith Rixon, Independent Examiner. 10th January 2019

Minutes of the 2018 AGM

Welcome and Apologies

The President Andy Humphries welcomed over 30 members to the 49th AGM of Alvechurch Village Society and received apologies on behalf of the following: Caroline French, Adrian Smith, Marion Barwell, Janet Smith, Grace Shepherd, Martin & Mariea Clark, Sue Lambert and Geoff Franklin.

Chairman's Welcome and Report

Grace opened with a reflection on the lives of Jim Parker and Lorna Sage who were both active members of the Society, and the Village, for many years. Indeed, Jim was a founder member and held offices including Chairman, Vice Chairman and Vice President. Lorna was a member from 1981 holding many offices including that of walk coordinator, committee member and Vice President.

AVS sets out to provide a variety of activities to encourage members from all ages. Grace thanked Adrian and his team for organising our first annual Treasure Hunt which was enjoyed by many. The now annual Picnic was mentioned – with AVS taking a stall once more to reflect the countryside and setting of Alvechurch – promoting Walks leaflets and gaining few new members. Walks leaflets are currently being reprinting. June saw the planting of a tree in the grounds of Sandhill Nursery as a thank you and retirement gift to Jim Parker. With kind permission of owners Mr Basra, a Copper Beech Tree was planted with the help of Jim, his family and many nursery children.

AVS member Sheila Parsons now organises two litter picks this year during which many bags of rubbish are collected. The next one is 15th April 2018.

Grace thanked Sarah for moderating and managing our very active FB page. Thanks also went to Adrian and our very active footpath team for clearing and maintaining our network of footpaths.

AVS guided walks continue to grow in popularity. These are held on the first Sunday in the month – thanks go to Adrian for continuing to manage and publish an active walk programme.

Thanks also go to Alvechurch Parish Council who AVS work very closely with and who we are reliant on for protecting the Parish of Alvechurch.

Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the previous AGM were proposed by Philip Aubury and seconded Sheila Hunter; these were carried unanimously.

Motion to approve 2017 Annual Accounts

Andy thanked Treasurer Caroline for her work as treasurer and for producing accounts for 2017.

A motion to approve the accounts was proposed by Philip Aubury, seconded by Keith Williams and passed unanimously.

Motion to approve 2017 Annual Report

Andy thanked Keith Williams for all his efforts once again in producing a superb Annual Report.

A motion to approve the Annual Report was proposed by Pat Riley, seconded by Nicki Thomas and passed unanimously.

President's Address

Andy gave a wonderfully reflective report looking back on the history of the Parish and how things continue to change and evolve. Jim Parker joined AVS in its inaugural year and Andy presented the report from that year, when the president was Sir Michael Higgs, WCC, no less. His address was about the road network.

Andy continued to reflect on the challenges the village had faced. The M42 was not called this originally – it was called a link road. There was no bypass, no commercial marina. The Weighbridge was a private club.

How things have changed! AVS has prevailed with the ethos of care for the village; so, whilst things have changed this ethos remains. Even back then the village design was a cause for concern. Andy mentioned the Design Statement which forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan which is very recent.

Change continues locally and nationally, and although Facebook, whilst recent, the premise of market research and consumer data has been around for many years.

Despite all the changes Alvechurch remains community minded and looks after its own. The Village – RIP The Green Belt – was written 10/15 years ago by Richard Peach. Birmingham is casting its eye over our land to take on extra houses. How we survive and move forward is down to us and AVS to embrace appropriate change and lobby to keep Alvechurch alive and thriving as a wonderful place to live.

Andy also mentioned stalwart members Jim and Lorna who we recently lost. Andy recalled dancing with the Morris Men here in the village – and remembers Lorna joined in. Jim ran the Historical Society annual tombola in his own inimitable laconic Lancastrian style. Both loved the village and the Society and will be sorely missed.

Andy recalled that the very gavel that is used today at AGMs was given by John Sidwell. All these are village treasures and should be remembered.

Andy proposed a vote of thanks to all the committee members for all their hard work during the year. And thanks everyone for attending and their support.

Election of Officers

Officers are continuing to stand as follows:

Chairman:	Grace Hampson	Vice Chair:	Ray Yarnell
Secretary:	Sarah Courbet	Treasurer:	Caroline French
Independent Examiner:	Keith Rixon		

Committee members

"The Committee" Names on block Proposed: Pat Parker Seconded: Christine Grainger

We may have a new committee member in Annette English who will be invited to our next committee meeting.

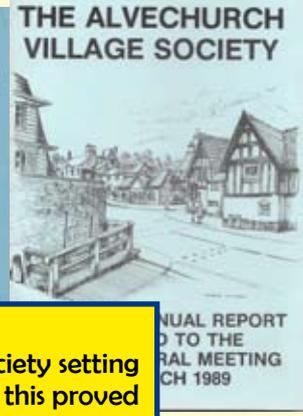
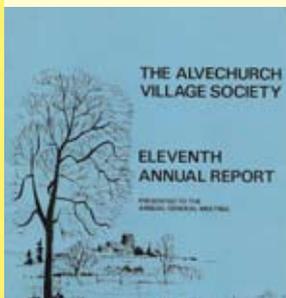
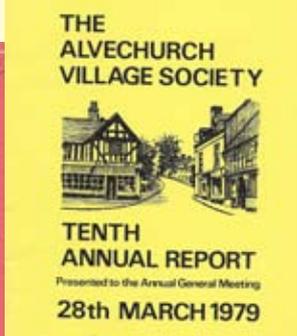
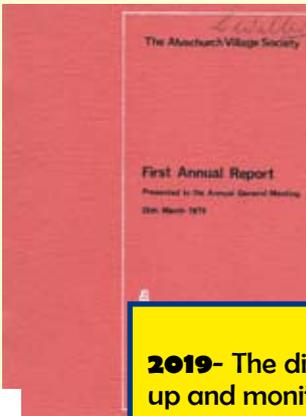
AOB

Grace presented Andy with a beautiful Camellia as a thank you for all his hard work and commitment. We are very fortunate that Andy will continue to support the Society.

The formal meeting was closed at 8.25pm. Wine and soft drinks were enjoyed during the second part of the evening with more informal conversations taking place.

Members who intend to attend the 2019 AGM will find agendas in the Village Hall on 20th March 2019. The meeting will start at 7.45 pm.

If you want to propose anything at the AGM or raise questions could you please contact AVS before 20th March 2019



2019- The digital age has well and truly arrived with the Society setting up and monitoring a Facebook page for villagers for 5 years- this proved very popular. It has grown and now runs independently.



The focus has been on the provision of facilities for young people in the village and support for the new Lounge facility in the precinct – a community café which supports much needed services for young people.

We have been pleased to be involved in Picnic in the Park in recent years- Held in May each year it has grown year on year and is now an established event in the village calendar

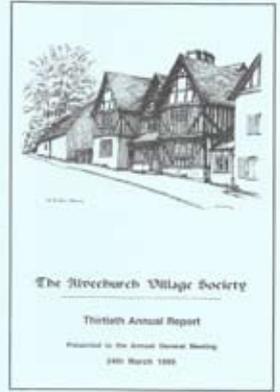
The Parish Council provided much needed leadership in finalising several years of consultation to agree a Neighbourhood Plan – the first to do so in Bromsgrove. This is necessary to ensure that housing and other developments are managed within a framework set out in the Plan, preserving the green belt but also looking forward to new developments in the village and its surroundings, which are sympathetic to the character of the village.

AVS continues to take an interest in the proposals for development including those for new housing at the parish boundaries with Redditch and Birmingham.

AVS is especially proud of the work done by the Footpaths Group, which was set up many years ago by Tom Hammond and taken over by Forrest Hansen, who introduced the end of season American breakfast.

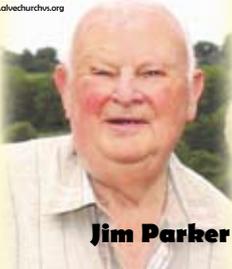
The good work carried on with various Footpath Wardens and is much appreciated by Worcestershire County Council and ramblers groups alike. The group is active and successful as ever under the leadership of former AVS Chairman , Adrian Smith

Here we are 50 years on and it is remarkable to see the changes, which the Village Society has seen in that time. Our concerns remain to preserve the green belt and the environment in which we live, as far as is possible, whilst acknowledging that changes will occur.

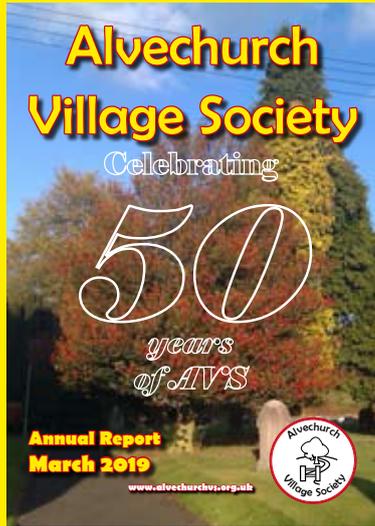
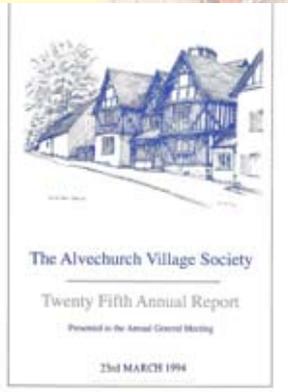


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Jim Parker



Barry Lynock



Lorna Sage

