

Chairman's Report

23rd September 2023.

Good afternoon members it's really good to see so many of you here today.

I think the West Sussex Centre is a centre to be envied, our rallies this last year have been amazing many of which have been really well attended. I know a few centres around us are struggling, due mainly to a lack of people willingly to run a committee which is a real shame. Your committee are dedicated and work really hard to ensure you all have a great time when rallying. I don't like to pick out any one person but I think you'll all agree that Dave Wightman does go that bit further...I would like to personally thank all of them so much for the time and effort they've put in during my time as Chairman I really do appreciate it as I'm sure the members do.

As I said the rallies have been exceptional this year being run by new and old rally officers.

Just to mention a few ...Midhurst Rother College in January when everyone is desperate to get out in their vans...and pretend spring is on its way. The rally was a European vacation where we sampled foods from afar and planned our holidays for the rest of the year. Our thanks to John and Pauline Kane who always end up being dragged in to help cook.

Our next venue was Littlehampton club site where it was definitely still winter but Pete and Freda Dales did manage to persuade people out of their vans for a lunchtime walk to the pub.

Royal Victoria Country Park, what a wonderful location and for first time rally officers Paul and Claire Marchant with the help of Pete and Freda Dales did a wonderful relaxing and entertaining long weekend.

Easter...Peter and I were lucky enough to be able to go to Ireland for the Irish National..well if you've never been it's quite an experience, the people are so friendly and very laid back everything starts at ish time, until about 1pm when out come all kinds of musical instruments and alcohol and the party starts. We never made it to the end.

West Sussex on the other hand were at Pierrepoint Farm one of my favourites with a committee run rally. Hot cross buns and Easter egg hunts were just some of the events.

Sadly a couple of rallies had to be cancelled this year.

The holiday rally at Osmington which was to be run by Kevin and Nicola but couldn't because their camper van was off the road after an accident ...we did ask for other members to come forward and run it but no one offered which is a real shame.

Stedham Mill, Keith and Sam Wood reluctantly cancelled when the weather became too dangerous to camp.

Pete and Freda ran a very popular 5 day rally at Ecclesden Farm. Having a large join in bbq and a walk to The Spotted Cow for lunch. You'll need to book early for next year.

One of my favourite rallies was the hobbies and crafts at Orchard Farm. Friday evening we were entertained by guitarist Neil Ainsby he was brilliant even though he did have quite a lot of heckling. Saturday was hobbies and crafts where members were asked to show case their hobbies it's amazing to see what other members get up to in their spare time, not to mention with their ukulele's. My thanks to Janette and Lee Mitten for running an excellent first rally. I can't wait to see what next year's will be.

The Chairman's rally at Butcherlands Farm. Friday evening we had a well fought skittles competition. Saturday evening we danced the night away with The Decades they had everyone up on the floor including Marion and Michael James who have been camping with us for 45 years. Sadly it was to be their last rally as they have now decided it's time to stop due to Marion's health. They have happily sold their van to a young family.

We wish them well.

Obviously one the highlights of the year is the family rally at Burstow. I think all the children small and large had a fantastic time it was a non stop round of eating, playing, having a water fight and more eating. We did manage to get all the children hyped up so the parents and grandparents didn't get any sleep. Shame.

There have of course been several other rallies Bob and Teresa Ellington ran Henfield, Rob and Jo Bayes ran Hole Park which I believe was very picturesque and the Gin tasting went down very well.

There are many other rallies and officers that haven't been mentioned and everyone has its own story to tell.

Thank you everyone who made the effort to run one.

West Sussex center had quite a large input at the Southern Centres rally, Pete Freda, Bob Teresa and Sam ran themselves ragged siting vans and being our CLOs, Dave and Julie Suckling organised the sports teams, Janine and Keith Aylmore with their bar and decorations for the Caribbean afternoon, myself and Lynn Smith from the Derbyshire centre ran the cake stall and raised £119. Sorry I hassled so many of you to make cakes but thank you.. and not forgetting Sue and Stuart Johnson and Nick and Christine Child's for all the hours they put in.

I would like to thank Bob Elkington and Dave Suckling who for several years have been our liaison officers for the South East Region. Bob has decided not to continue this year. We hope you enjoy your travels Bob.

Nick Child's has very kindly offered to replace him.

One of the really good things that Peter and I have succeeded in is our Charity fundraising for Cancer Research Uk. We have to date raised £ 2217.75 I'm sure most of you will now have a bird house. Thank you.

As most of you know Peter and I have been on quite an emotional journey since joining the West Sussex Centre and I would like to say ' thank you ' for all your help and kindness over this period.

Although we are both stepping down from committee we will still be around and involved. You can't get rid of us that easily.

I would like to welcome the new committee and wish them the best of luck for the coming year.

Lastly we have sadly lost quite a few of our members this past year so I would like you to all stand for a 2 minutes silence whilst we remember them.

So thank you everyone. I look forward to seeing you on the rally field.