BARBARA

Barbara has been Chair of WRC since February 2015 and tonight we would like to thank her for her amazing contribution to the committee and to our village for all those years.

When we, as a committee, have reflected on Barbara’s time as Chair, the overwhelming impression we all have is of her tireless energy, endless dedication, enthusiasm, innovation, imagination and did I mention ***energy***?

You may recall an advert some years ago where toy rabbits were fitted with plain old batteries which sooner, rather than later, ran out of power…Then along came the Duracell battery which kept its rabbit running indefinitely…well that’s Barbara! Barbara’s energy is legendary, she continues to keep going when the rest of us are flagging. And we have been so fortunate to have her services as Chair for the past 8 years. But now she feels that it is time to hand on her files and keys to a new Chair , Lacey Owen, though Barbara ***will*** remain on the committee as a Back Bencher. We won’t let her go!

I am told by members of the committee at the time, that when she took over the Chair, Barbara was like a breath of fresh air; Whilst respecting the traditions that had been created over the years, the committee was encouraged to review how things were approached. Many events and tasks were examined to see whether they were still appropriate or could be delivered in a different way.

But the ***needs of the community*** were always foremost in these decisions and with a reducing group of volunteers, it was essential that we continued to deliver community events and fundraising,  to ensure the future of the village hall as a community asset. Barbara steered the committee through these changes with strong leadership and empathy!

During her time as Chair, Barbara has hauled us into the 21st century! On many occasions she worked with June into the wee small hours, setting up a proper working website; a Facebook page; arranging Wi-Fi; Sum-up cashless payments, online bookings, ticket scanning via mobile phones – who knew it was all possible?

Once it again it was Barbara’s knowledge, technical know-how and foresight that led the way on these innovations. I am assured that Barbara is QuickBooks Queen of the accounting package and she possesses the technical wizardry to get Card Readers to work! There is no end to her magic!

Barbara has also brought to the role of Chair her professional knowledge to ensure that our village hall is a safer place and that events organised by the committee comply with Health and Safety guidance. Her professionalism now underpins everything we do; though we are a charity run by volunteers, we do things professionally thanks to Barbara.

Barbara has been the driving force of many village events, committed to making events the best they can be. She began the drive for a new village hall, which finally seems to be closer to becoming a reality and she has transformed the Village Fete, with a horticultural show and crafts.

In fact, another of Barbara’s innovations is our Crafting Group, inspiring members to create wonderful items to sell at the village bazaars and fetes. Many of these evenings have taken place at Barbara’s house and it is amazing how Barbara can magic up buttons, sequins, ribbons, jam jars, fabrics and all manner of frippery. These occasions can be quite riotous affairs, making Barbara’s house look as if a crafting bomb has gone off but miraculously the most wonderful items are created out of very little. Yet Barbara takes it all in her stride and even provides home-made cakes and the odd tipple! And that’s the key thing about Barbara – working with her is FUN!

Barbara is renowned for her creative thinking – remember her Car Treasure Hunt and the Book Shop! But the key thing about Barbara is that she sees things through. Her ‘Blue Sky Thinking’ results in great village events and Barbara is often the last one locking the village hall door at the end of such an occasion! That Duracell battery rabbit again!

Which leads me to yet another of Barbara’s passions – her organisation and transformation of the cupboards, with everything organised and labelled, is fabled.

Though there have been occasions when this has got her into trouble.

At the end of a recent Summer Fete, Barbara was just tidying and reorganising the Gazebos cupboard…leave it tidy so it’s ready for the next occasion…But on this day, she was tired, it had been a long day, but if she could just get the gazebos properly in place, then she would go home. Unfortunately, the gazebos thought otherwise… and refused to co-operate which resulted in Barbara being pinned on her back inside the gazebo cupboard beneath a heavy pile of metal and material, hopelessly calling for help. Fortunately, Malcom was still around, heard the cries for aid and Barbara was dragged gratefully back into the light.

So there we are – a dedicated public servant, who genuinely wants to make the world, and our village, a better place.

Barbara – thank you so much! And here is a little token of our gratitude!