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| **STONNALL CAMPAIGN ABOUT ROADS** | |
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**SCAR CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT.**

**Financial Year ending 31st March 2024**

This report aims to give a brief overview and summary of the main activities of SCAR during this financial year and an indication of future events.

**1 Director’s Meetings and held Campaign Committee Meetings**

SCAR started the year with 8 Directors an increase of 5 from the year before. There have been regular meetings of the Directors to manage all aspects of running SCAR as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

There have been six Campaign Committee meetings held during this year and several other meetings of the Chester Road Campaign Group.

SCAR attended Stonnallbury & organized a cheese & wine evening for the village.

**2 Main Activities**

With the shocking death of Alan Preston of Pelsall Cycling Club at the junction of Lazy Hill & Chester Road, SCAR set up the Chester Road Campaign Group consisting of 12 people. This was well supported by the village & the 600+ members of SCAR. The 12 campaign members worked hard to set up a petition to have road safety improvements made with the junctions of the Chester Road. Main Street, Downs Gate, Lazy Hill & Gravelly Lane opposite Birch Lane have all had problems with collisions in the past. One of the biggest issues faced was the location of the boundary between Staffordshire & Walsall councils. The boundary line is along the Stonnall side pavement of the Chester Road. Unfortunately, the threshold for change was not reached as the Highways Agency only look at the number of deaths within a three year period. At the time of our first contact with Walsall council they were looking at dates from 2019-2022.

We had to create a petition we could hand in to both Staffordshire & Walsall Councils. We had over 1700 people sign the petition. The people that signed the petition did not just live in Stonnall but also in Walsall, Aldridge, Pelsall, Walsall Wood, Bloxwich, Rushall & Birmingham, Lichfield & further afield. We also created a detailed data log of all collisions & near misses at the junctions. In doing so people came to us to tell us of the past incidents they had been involved in, witnessed and the near misses they had seen. We included these & any photographic & video evidence from dash cams into the report.

Having over the threshold of 1500 signatures gave me as Chairman of SCAR the opportunity to speak and represent SCAR at a full Walsall Council meeting on 28th February. With just 5 minutes to put our case forward I concentrated on the facts we know from the data log we had compiled & data that is already in the public domain going back to 2002. With 5 deaths recorded between 2002 & 2023 we felt sure Walsall & Staffordshire Councils would want to make improvements to the junctions. The latest news from Walsall Council is that they plan to spend £54,000 on reducing the speed limit on the Chester Road from 50mph down to 40mph. They have also said they will put in average speed cameras and Vehicle Activated Signs along the 40mph stretch. We wait to see the full plans in detail in due course. There has been a lot of support locally throughout the year from Staffordshire County, Parish, and District Councilors who also enlisted the help of a local MP to assist in the campaign culminating in a visit to Stonnall by the leader of Walsall Council.

SCAR thanks each Councillor for their hard work and coming together as a team to encourage Walsall Council to make plans for the Chester Road improvements.

In this respect, we especially commend Staffordshire County Council for reaching out to Walsall Council to facilitate good communications and support the road safety measures that have been planned.

On other matters.

SCAR have also started to work with the Parish Council looking at traffic calming measures & Speed Indication Devices and the positive and negative impacts in other regions. This is a new project and is very much in its infancy. SCAR has worked hard to look at data that is in the public domain and to also look at how the technology works and what it can offer and at what costs.

SCAR is also actively looking at the Stonnall Neighborhood Plan, in areas such as highways, transport, road safety & public footpaths.

SCAR will be releasing a Newsletter every quarter to update residents of its activities.

SCAR is constantly reviewing local planning applications to ensure all developments in and around the village consider road safety as part of their planning application. Where this has not been considered SCAR raise concerns with the planning authority. The barn development on Cartersfield Lane and Gorse Farm on Lazy Hill are such developments where SCAR has raised concerns.

**3 Membership of SCAR Ltd**

Membership numbers have increased by 18 people in the year. We had several new members sign up at our stall at Stonnallbury 2023.

Work is currently being done on the data base to update this with people who have left the village and to put the existing paper-based system on to a computer data base. This is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken.

**4 Fund Raising**

Friday 8th September 2023 saw the return of the much-enjoyed SCAR Cheese & Wine evening. We had over 90 paying guests which raised our funds with a profit of over £500. We also had a stall at Stonnallbury 2023 which was to make people aware of our work and sign-up new members.

**5 SCAR Company**

All returns have been submitted on time to Companies House and all financial accounts and returns completed to requirements.

All SCAR documents continue to be stored in The Community Hall at a rent of £11.00 per annum for the space.

**6 Other areas**

**6.1 Website & social media.**

We now have a new SCAR website. The new website allows us to update the members and non-members on upcoming meetings & minutes from past meetings. We can also use it as a place to leave other documents & presentations we have created. All minutes from past meeting are available on the website. We now also have a SCAR Facebook & Twitter X page. We are seeing more activity on all media outputs and our SCAR Directors are involved in replying to questions & comments in a timely manner.

**6.2 Newsletters:** We continue to place posters of our latest information & updates on the notice boards in the village, at bus stops & in shop windows. We also place posts in the Parish and St Peters church newsletters.

**6.3 Shire Oak Quarry:**

In the summer of 2023 several SCAR Directors, along with other people from Stonnall village, residents, Head Teacher of St Peters school, local business owners and prominent people within Stonnall community attended an open day at Shire Oak Quarry. JPE gave a really informative day on what the quarry is doing, its history in Stonnall and also the conservation work they are doing.

**7. Nomination of Directors**

SCAR have placed messages on the SCAR website, our social media and have placed posters around the village asking for new Directors. We have no new applications so far.

**8 Summary**

I firmly believe that the role of SCAR is fundamental in several key areas:

* As a road safety awareness group & to be a point of contact with residents & members on any road related issues in Stonnall.
* Campaign to make roads and lanes safer from speeding traffic for all road users & pedestrians.
* Campaign to reduce the flows of traffic through the village.
* Campaign to protect the village from issues caused with possible housing developments and the effects that will have on traffic in Stonnall.
* Be the link to liaise with Parish, District, County Councils and Police authorities on road related matters.
* Influence and encourage controls over workings from Shire Oak Quarry

To continue this great work SCAR needs a well-supported campaign committee made up of people from Stonnall who care about our community and are willing to get involved.

SCAR can only survive if we can keep the membership numbers growing and keep a healthy number of Directors on the Board. We currently have 8 Directors but are looking to have more sign up this year. We can have up to 12 Directors on the Board. The more Directors we have on the board the more we can achieve by sharing the workload. The duties of the Directors differ depending on the campaigns & activities of SCAR. In the last 12 months we have spent our time looking into the technical advantages & costs of many, road traffic calming measures, their impact & the results of other installations in the area. We have also looked into local planning applications and monitored their progress and reasons for acceptance & denial. We have also ran a successful petition which has been very labour intensive, ensuring the correct data is collected and making people aware of the aims of the petition. If you have any skills that you think would help SCAR please get in touch.

The current board of Directors & committee members will continue to monitor the Chester Road junctions and the actions of Walsall & Staffordshire Councils in the promised road safety improvements. We will keep you informed on our website and will post the updates on our social media & via our quarterly SCAR newsletter.

Thank you all very much for your continued support.

Adrian Walters.

Chairman