**Crystal Palace Band**

**Chair’s Report 2020**

This banding year closes in the most strange of circumstances that none of us could have imagined at the last AGM. Even before the current crisis it was an eventful year for both good and bad reasons.

On the positive side the Progress Band grew numerically and in standard, to the point where it was necessary to form ‘6 O Clock Brass’ to cater for players just beginning and cater for a lower age group . This was successfully established before the shutdown.

The Main Band also continued to recruit new players which has been fortunate, because with some long standing players departing or not available we have a had a fluid situation in terms of playing membership, but this has also given opportunity for players in the Progress Band to step up to fill gaps. Mike has commented on our musical achievements

We now truly are the Crystal Palace Bands (in the plural). Our banding at all levels is clearly attractive for South East London and for that we must thank both Mike Gray and Dave Howell for their leadership and their immense efforts - which we should always remind ourselves are given free.

On the negative side Tom Whittaker had to stand down as Chair and take a 3 month break from the band due his wife’s pregnancy loss. We are so pleased to see him back with us – even if mostly on Zoom! Chris and Carol Meyer decided to leave after over 30 years and Danny Wakefield also scaled back his banding activities.

We also note the downturn in gig revenues which has long been threatened as Councils become ever more reluctant to finance music activities in their parks and bandstands. This coming year is going to be very difficult in that respect.

Taken together our Bands are very much at a crossroads at the moment, not least because a number of people who have long served the band in a variety of capacities are keen to step back and pass the organisational activities on to new hands, or take on new challenges.

Our success as an organisation and the friendly, supportive atmosphere we always seek to engender are greatly due to the efforts of your committee and its officers including the Progress Band committee. On your behalf I would like to thank them for all their commitment and efforts.

Current circumstances make it difficult to see what sort of future we have to prepare for, but provided we all remain committed and prepared to contribute and participate, then our banding will remain fun and purposeful whatever comes our way. Hopefully by the autumn we will be able to have our planned ‘Away Day’ to appoint the new committee and offices and also consider afresh what we all want get out of our Crystal Palace Bands.

David Charlesworth

Acting Chair