

Whitchurch Award 2020

Parish Council chairman Jim Donahue announced the award at the Annual Parish Assembly on 28th May and made these comments:

“The winner of the 2020 Whitchurch Award goes to two people, Sally and Peter Woolhouse.

There were a number of nominations for them individually or together, and the Parish Council agreed that they were both highly deserving of the award. While I know they each have contributed to the village individually and together in their own way, I am sure that they are happy to share this award together.

There are so many ways that Peter and Sally contributed to the village, and they have been doing so for many years, having moved to the village 42 years ago. They do so much for the good of the village, whether that is picking up litter, digging drainage ditches or cutting hedges and planting trees.

I know Peter, a retired bricklayer, originally laid the bricks for the Maze free of charge, now almost 20 years ago. They were both instrumental in the subsequent two refurbishments to it, and of course are the organisers of the monthly Maze Working parties. Currently they are maintaining it on their own. Peter arranged for 21-gun salutes from his flint musket group on at least two occasions.

Sally, a long-time member of WoTHabs has a special interest in fostering the Maze as a place of biodiversity through its wildflowers and specially designed maintenance plan where certain areas should be cut at just the right time of year – after they are fully seeded, I am told. I know she is particularly proud of the two elm trees which were planted at the Maze by the Butterfly Conservation in 2018. These elms are the essential foodplant for the caterpillar of the rare White-Letter Hairstreak butterfly which can be found at the Maze.

I am a former member of WoTHabs so know how much she has done to help organise so many activities ranging from the annual Hay Meadow walk to the Explorer Days for young people.

I have many fond memories of Sally and Peter at Apple Day at the Maze with Peter playing his gramophone and recordings of 1930s and 40s American Jazz.

Aside from the Maze, Sally often spends time with the children at the village Primary School teaching them about nature and she recently started the Nature Notes on the village website, which everyone should be reading, if you haven't already. Sally has also been involved for many years in the Whitchurch United Charity where she has held many different positions including Treasurer and Secretary and meticulously organises the annual Arts & Crafts Exhibition and makes an enormous contribution to its success.

Peter has carried out maintenance around the village, often at short notice, to repair damage or to improve facilities, such as the recent improvements to the fence at the Village Green by the paddock, and repair of benches when there were problems on the Village Green. Pete has, without doubt, saved the village a great deal of money getting these little odd jobs done with very little recognition.

And it is not just what they do, but also how they do it. It may be difficult for me as an American to appreciate all the subtleties of their charm, but I would say they are two of the nicest people you will ever meet, always having time to listen and talk and always putting others first. Their dedication to the community life of the village is clear, and together with their complementary skills, they have set a great example. They have made a huge difference to life in our village, and for that we should all be grateful.”