

## **Margaret Haywood**

If you live in Flackwell, you are likely to have met Margaret Haywood. She has lived here since 1959, when she moved here from Hayes with her husband, Peter. Since then, she has been involved with many aspects of village life, usually helping to get things done, on a committee, a council, a board of governors.

Her son, Guy, was born in 1964, and as he grew up she was involved in the Carrington Nursery School, the Tufty club (whose main focus was on Road Safety for children), and as an Akela with the Cubs. For 6 years she took 30 plus boys for weekends at Hambleden. Then, naturally, she became a school manager/governor, at junior schools and at the old Pembroke Secondary School. In parallel, she has served at various levels of local government, first the old Wycombe Rural District Council, then Wycombe District Council and Chepping Wycombe Parish Council. She always stood as an Independent, and preferred the days when most other councillors were also Independents. Once councillors were sponsored by political parties, decisions tended to be taken outside the meeting.

Margaret has always been good with figures, and so been happy to keep an eye on the financial side of the various organisations, and she has also taken a special interest in leisure facilities and planning. She is known, she says, for her ability to keep reports brief! As the burden of paperwork has mounted, this skill has been increasingly valued by her colleagues.

Her biggest achievement, she feels, was finding the money to get the new Community Centre built. Her biggest disappointment was that although the Centre was and is heavily used, it didn't quite foster as much sense of community as she had hoped. There was a loss of atmosphere compared to the old Community Centre, the main hall was too big and its acoustics were poor, and the stage was not much used.

Margaret's energies have not been confined to committee work; for example, she looked after the Community Centre garden (a labour of love in which Peter joined her). She raised money for, bought and planted the daffodils along the roadside verges and in the green patches in the village (flowered well this year, didn't they?).

She has also served on the Buckinghamshire Valuation Tribunal, the Gas Consumer Council and on the committees of various local clubs. The length of this list might suggest a 'dabbler', who moves on after a few years, but Margaret maintains her interest for long periods.

Such an active, confident, public-spirited woman has been a great boon to Flackwell. Many facilities we now enjoy are at least partly her doing. Everyone has the defects of their qualities, and not all those who have worked with her have found her easy to take. Her confidently-expressed opinions have grated on some and occasionally disheartened the more timid. Her preference for taking a problem to the top of an organisation has sometimes irritated those she bypassed. Her response to those who disagree with her is to suggest they stand for election themselves. Some have done so and found after their election that more time and effort was required than they had imagined.

Margaret retired from the Parish Council in 2002, after 30 years service. For the

last five of those years she was Chairman, and John Savage, also a Parish Councillor, says her leadership qualities were very valuable.

Now Margaret continues to play tennis, work on her garden and allotment, and enjoy membership of a number of clubs. There's just one remaining job: she still organises clinics which screen workers in the furniture industry for nasal cancer. Otherwise, she says, she's retired. Why don't I altogether believe her?

Sue Arnautov