

## *The Beaconsfield Society*

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006 HELD IN THE FITZWILLIAMS CENTRE, WINDSOR END, BEACONSFIELD ON MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2006 AT 8.00 PM

**1) Welcome by the President** John Gorton welcomed the members present and the guest speaker Chris Marchant, Head of Property and Contract Services at South Bucks District Council. John reported that we had a good year, Awareness Day is a fine event that has grown from strength to strength over the years and Heritage Day was enjoyable in a very pleasant location. The Newsletter is very informative and keeps members up to date with the work of the Society. The Society through the Civic Trust and the Association of North Thames Amenity Societies is linked to a wider network of experience and influence. Beaconsfield has a fine environment, good schools and easy access. There have been problems with construction work, higher density housing with a lack of suitable infrastructure. The Motorway Service Area is unwanted, not needed and will cause traffic problems. Wilton Park is a potential problem when the Military finally leave. John ended with a plea to all members to work to increase membership of the Society by inviting friends and neighbours to join.

**2) Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Dominic Grieve MP, Geoff Grover and Doug Manocha.

**3) Minutes of last AGM and matters arising**

The minutes of the 2004 AGM were accepted. Proposed by Jackie Dawes and seconded by Nick Harrandell. There were no matters arising.

**4) Chairman's report**

Alan Green reported:

As always, we had our main function of the year, Awareness Day, on the Council Green in June. This was very successful with some 50 organisations being represented and wonderful weather. Everyone seemed to have a good time and our thanks go to Kay Rogers who did a terrific job in organising everything.

Also this summer, by kind permission of the Director, we had a guided tour for Society members of the National Film & Television School. This was another very successful event and it was of great interest to learn how many of the household names in film and television attended the school here in Beaconsfield. There is a big development scheme currently under way at the school which will also include a cinema. This, we understand, will be open to the public. Our thanks to Doug Manocha for organising this event.

Our Heritage Day visit this year for members was a conducted tour of Taplow Court, an historic and most interesting building which is now a lay Buddhist Centre. Jackie Dawes organised this and has our thanks.

During the year, on behalf of our members, we have attended various other meetings and functions, including the Traffic Symposium organised by the County Council and Neighbourhood Action Group meetings organised by Thames Valley Police. We have also attended meetings and made submissions in relation to the Draft Statement of Community Involvement and Core Strategy which will guide development in the District for the next fifteen years and replaces the District Local Plan and County Structure Plan. We have also been in contact with the Highways Agency concerning the amount of litter on the slip roads at junction 2 of the M40. They have written to us to say that they have identified a problem with this particular motorway and are taking steps to deal with it. We continue to monitor planning applications on your behalf, operating in accordance with the mandate given to your committee by you, our members, some 5 years ago. These are not just applications made through South Bucks, but also include those from Chiltern District Council covering the northern part of the New Town and those from the County Council. Our views seem

to coincide fairly closely with those of our Town Council, but to a lesser extent at District level. Even when it seems we are all agreed the developers come back with additional and persistent applications. Of real concern is that the Beaconsfield we have known could, before too long, become a town of blocks of flats mixed in with large over-dominant properties behind electronic gates.

One planning application that it seemed hardly anyone wanted, and which is going ahead and there is nothing we can do about it, is the off-line Motorway Service Area at junction 2 on the M40. Building is due to start in spring next year and the disruption is likely to be considerable. It seems that the main reason for the area being sited in Beaconsfield is that it fits this government's yardstick of a service area every 25 miles of motorway. It will no doubt get used, of course, 'because it's there'.

At the culmination of last year's AGM, we were asked to form a campaign group to save The Town Hall. The landlords are South Bucks District Council and the Town Council's lease runs out in June next year. We did not form a campaign group as such, as there was nothing definite to campaign about. We did, however, make our concerns known to our Town Council, SBDC and our MP Dominic Grieve. We gather that matters are confidential and that negotiations about a renewal of the lease are currently 'ongoing'.

There are many other things that we do on behalf of our members, which do not warrant featuring in this report. There is one recent matter, however, about which we have been in correspondence with Bucks County Council. That concerns pedestrian crossings and we have endorsed the view that Holtspur Top Lane would benefit from a crossing near its junction with Cherry Tree Road. The Council has responded saying that funding is not available for this. In addition, we have been intrigued by the red tarmac strips recently laid at the Burkes and Gregories Road junctions with Station Road. It occurred to us that they could be dangerous, encouraging children to step out thinking they are safe. Apparently, Bucks CC thinks that motorists will see them as crossing places for pedestrians and behave accordingly. It would seem that funds are not available for proper crossings and these are seen as an inexpensive alternative.

Our website has, in the past, rather let the Society down. I am pleased to be able to report that considerable progress has been made regarding updating the Society's website. Barnaby Lathom-Sharpe has been very active in this regard and we are grateful for his efforts in managing this facility.

There is speculation that the Ministry of Defence is about to announce its intention to vacate Wilton Park. Should that happen then there would be huge interest in the site from property developers. 2007 could be a most interesting year for our town and we need to increase this Society's membership. If every member recruited just one other household our voice would be much stronger. At £10 for household membership, no matter how many persons, and with the visits and functions we lay on during the year, this really is a sound investment.

## **5) Treasurer's report**

Nick Harrandell reported that income was a little below expected, mainly due to members not updating Standing Orders to the new rate. We have made no significant investments this year and reducing numbers of printed Newsletters has reduced costs.

The Society has made a contribution of £100 to the Festival of Lights.

Overall this year net receipts have exceeded payments by £450.07.

The accounts were accepted. Proposed by Shirley Scrivener, seconded by Ann Green.

## **6) Presentation of Society's awards**

Les Davies presented the Outstanding Citizen Award to Audrey Coles for her untiring work over 13 years as Director of the Beaconsfield Advisory Centre. For her work in setting up and running the Beaconsfield and District Carers Support Group and for her work at County level with Bucks Carers and with Family Carers. More recently she has helped to set up the Good Neighbours Scheme to provide help to local people with transport, shopping and company needs.

Dermot Cox presented the Outstanding Building Award to Steve Allan representing English Courtyard for the development of St Mary's Court behind Windsor End. A very appropriate development that fitted in to the Old Town environment and provided excellent, spacious and well planned accommodation for older residents.

## **7) Election of Officers and Committee**

Alan Green asked the Vice President, Les Davies, to supervise the election of Chairman.

**Chairman** - Alan Green proposed by Les Davies seconded by John Gorton.

Election of Officers passed back to Alan Green.

**Vice Chairman** - Dermot Cox proposed by Alan Green seconded by Kay Rogers

**Treasurer** - Nick Harrandell proposed by Shirley Scrivener seconded by Doug Manocha.

**Secretary** - Michael Harrison proposed by Nick Harrandell seconded by Les Davies.

**Committee** - Alan Green informed members that no additional nominations had been received for the committee and proposed a vote en-bloc for Jackie Dawes, Doug Manocha, Kay Rogers and Shirley Scrivener. Proposed by Alan Green seconded by Dermot Cox.

All officers and committee members were elected unanimously.

Alan Green paid tribute to Geoff Grover as the Town Council appointed representative on the committee. We are fortunate to have Geoff who is very easy to work with and who keeps us well informed of Council activities that he is allowed to divulge.

## **8) Any Other Business**

There was no other business and the formal part of the meeting was completed.

Alan Green introduced Councillor Bill Lidgate, Cabinet Member on South Bucks District Council. Bill set the scene by noting that residents were happy with the black sack collections but we need to recycle much more to reduce infill volumes. Changes are coming and he introduced Chris Marchant who is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Council.

Chris outlined the current situation with a relatively good recycling rate of 23% in 04/05. The challenge now is to reach 30% in the short term. The need is to separate compostible material, glass and paper. Plastic does cause a problem with high volumes for low weight.

Wheelie bins are being tested in the Denham area and do appear to be accepted by the residents.

The Council is in negotiation with Contractors to agree new contracts to achieve the Council's aims.

Alan Green thanked Bill and Chris for their clear and open presentation of the challenges and the SBDC proposed actions.

Alan thanked the members for coming and invited them to partake in a glass of wine or soft drink and to informally discuss matters of interest with the committee and the speakers.