



THE BEACONSFIELD SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for the year 2012-2013 held in the Council Chamber, Beaconsfield Town Hall on Wednesday 6 November 2013 starting at 7.30 pm

Present: The following Committee members and twenty six members and guests were present.

Committee: President: Les Davies, Vice President: Sandy Saunders, Chairman: Mike Elliott, Treasurer: Tony Bristow, Secretary: Laurence Smaje.

Other committee members: Kari Dorne, Graeme Richards, co-opted members: Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden

1. **Apologies for absence:** John Burton, Jess McEvoy, John Page, Shirley Scrivener, Henry Wilson.

2. Welcome by the President.

The President welcomed the members and guests present and then challenged the Chairman saying that his record for the shortest time he had chaired a meeting in the Council Room had been 8 minutes. Our Chairman had no intention of rising to this challenge as he had good news to report which would take at least 8 minutes by itself. Before that however he was pleased to welcome representatives from Inland Homes who would be speaking after the formal business was completed.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 2011-12 held on 8 November 2012

These were approved by the membership as a correct record, proposed by Nanu Hodson and seconded by Kari Dorne.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

5. Chairman's report.

The Chairman introduced his comments by saying that the Society's strapline was *celebrating the past, promoting the present and influencing the future* and that we had made progress in all three during the year.

The 75th anniversary of Enid Blyton's arrival in Beaconsfield was celebrated for a whole week in early July and had been a great success, with both local and national press coverage as well as interview with Kari Dorne on the BBC news. This was achieved because of the enthusiasm and co-operation of Bekonscot, the National Film and Television School and the Library, each of whom arranged special events for the public and our members. What made this all possible was the financial support of the Frost Partnership for which we are very grateful

The Chairman also took this opportunity to give a plug for next year's commemoration, a performance by Linda Hart and Gabriel Woolf who gave such an interesting and moving account

celebrating the centenary of Robert Frost's time in Beaconsfield last year. In 2014 they will be commemorating the life and work of the First World War poets, several of whom had connections with Beaconsfield.

The *present was promoted* through our annual Beaconsfield Now! event where local organisations have the opportunity to showcase their work on the Council Green in early June. Promotion is a crucial element in success and we are grateful to the Shanly Foundation for their generous support for the event as a whole with further help from the Frost Partnership who provided the roadside advertisement boards. Doubtless because of this publicity we had a record attendance this year which was enjoyed by all – at least until the rain washed away those remaining at 1 pm. Finally, our contribution to *influencing the future* is via our collaboration with BOTRA and others on Wilton Park Watch. This aims to establish a creative dialogue with local government, the MOD and the developers Inland Homes and Jansons in order to ensure the best possible outcome for Beaconsfield provided by the Wilton Park development. It has not been easy to establish contact with BCC and SBDC for reasons that are not entirely clear to us. They are our representatives and we are members of their constituency but we continue to try. We continue to be vigilant over planning applications and object to the outrageous ones. Success is rare, but from time to time we can claim that our objections have led to improvements.

One of our concerns has been to try to improve the street scene. Recent dialogue with BCC has led to their granting permission for the Society to remove illegal street signs which we shall be undertaking shortly.

The Chairman then turned to future changes in the Committee. First he wished to pay tribute to Sandy Saunders, our Vice President and previous chairman. Sandy had been a great mentor to him and if everyone had his energetic approach in pursuing the best for Beaconsfield, we would have a better town. Tony Bristow had served 5 years as Treasurer, the maximum allowed by our Constitution, and would thus retire at the end of this AGM. Tony had kept a prudent eye on our finances but always with a view to helping the Society fulfil its brief and the Chairman was delighted that he had agreed to remain on the Committee albeit retiring to the backbenches. Finally the Chairman regretted that Jess McEvoy had said she did not wish to seek re-election as her other obligations prevented her from contributing to the Committee's work as much as she wished. He was grateful however, that Jess said she would continue to help when she can. Finally he expressed pleasure in introducing Colin Mitchell to the Society. Colin had been heavily involved in the Beaconsfield community for many years and expressed the wish to become even more involved though joining the Committee.

6. Treasurer's Report

The statement of the Receipts and Payments Account for the year to 30 September 2013 had been tabled, so the Treasurer felt it necessary to highlight only a few significant differences from previous years.

Perhaps the most important feature was that the closing balance was considerably stronger this year than last year for two reasons. One was that the Enid Blyton celebration and Beaconsfield Now! both had surpluses, a substantial one in the case of the End Blyton events. The other was an increase by 22 in membership which now totals 130 active members following a membership campaign. A reduction in costs due to careful budgeting by organisers also helped.

Before finishing his final report, the Treasurer expressed his grateful thanks to John Postgate for examining our Accounts.

The Treasurer's report was accepted by the meeting following a proposal by Deirdre Smaje and seconded by Debbie Marsden.

7. Presentation of Society's Awards

Outstanding Citizen of the Year



The President announced this year's winner , Sheila Newland, as a good example of something that Beaconsfield people are good at - service to the community. She has an outstanding record of encouraging people in Music and Drama and in so doing has enriched the lives of many, young and old.

Sheila has lived in Beaconsfield for over 50 years having come here to teach music at Oakdene girls school.. She went on to teach music at Butlers Court School and is fondly remembered by parents and pupils for her very successful period there and for high achievements in local music festivals. She's also been active in the Performing Arts having appeared in and directed many productions with Beaconsfield Operatic

Society and Beaconsfield Theatre Group.

She was a founder member of Beaconsfield Young Theatre and was their President for 12 years. She also founded the Newland Singers, a mixed group of about 20 voices who gave great enjoyment to local audiences and raised thousands of pounds for local charities.

Sheila continues to teach Music and to host local music exams in her home as she has for over 30 years and finally, she remains a stalwart of the Choir at St Mary & All Saints Church.

The President then presented Sheila with the framed certificate.

Outstanding Building of the Year

The Secretary then announced that, in several recent years the Society had been unable to make its Building Award because of a lack of worthy recipients. This year, however, it wished to make two awards.



*The first was for the **Building of the Year** for the Taverley Place development at Horseshoe Crescent by Shanly Homes. The Secretary quoted from the nomination paper which read as follows: Of the new developments in the Old Town we believe this to be not only the most sympathetic with existing architecture but actually the only one to enhance Aylesbury End & the Old Town. The Society's Committee agreed entirely with this and felt pleased to be able to make the award to Shanly Homes.*

The President then presented the certificate to Ian Smith, senior surveyor for the development, who accepted it on behalf of Shanly Homes.

Our other award, **Community Building of the Year**, was made to the new Guide Headquarters in Malthouse Square. This replaced the previous 80 year old wooden building which had deteriorated so badly that it was no longer fit for purpose.

The new building was definitely fit for purpose, not only for the 10 guides groups of all ages, but also for letting to other organisations who have been besieging the Guides since it was opened. There is a large ground floor hall, with a splendid well-fitted kitchen and an upstairs hall for small meetings, together with plenty of storage space. The word *Community* above applies not only to the building award, but to the community as a whole which rallied round and found the funds, including from their own pockets. Furthermore, the architects Heighway Associates generously gave their services both of design and project management free of charge, which was of major help to the project.



The President then presented the certificate to Morag Mason, District Commissioner, who in reply reiterated how grateful the Guides were to so many people in the community and especially to the fund-raising committee and to Heighway Associates and the many others who had helped them achieve their goal.

8. Election of Officers and Committee

The President took the Chair for the election of the Chairman, and Mike Elliott, who had been proposed by the Committee, was elected unanimously.

The Chairman then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. The Committee had proposed that the new Vice President should be John Page as he had had a distinguished record in local government and community affairs and had been serving on the Committee for two years. This was agreed by the meeting. The Chairman proposed that Graeme Richards be the new Treasurer, to

which he had expressed his agreement, and Laurence Smaje had agreed to continue as Secretary. Both were approved by the meeting. He then proposed that the other candidates for election or re-election as set out on the Election Paper be considered *en bloc*. This was agreed by the meeting and the following Committee members were elected:

Officers: Chairman: Mike Elliott, Treasurer: Graeme Richards, Secretary: Laurence Smaje
Other members: Tony Bristow, John Burton, Kari Dorme, Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden, Colin Mitchell

9. Any other business

The Chairman opened this item by seeking suggestions from the members present for future activities of the Society. The following suggestions were made.

- **Michael Harrison:** The Society used to have visits or other events throughout the year. This had not taken place this year.
We had held the Enid Blyton celebration but would consider other events for next year too.
- **Sue Davies:** There had been proposals to build a skate park in response to a meeting on anti-social behaviour. What had happened to this proposal and were the Beaconsfield Society involved?
No, the Beaconsfield Society had not been involved. The initiative came from BOTRA and was taken up by Beaconsfield Town Council as they owned the land on which any likely skate park was to be built. The Council has shelved the proposal.
- **Deborah Sanders:** Beaconsfield's Open Spaces were poorly used in her view. Most of them were owned by the Town Council and other local Councils appear to use their spaces more imaginatively. Could the Society not exert its influence to change this state of affairs?
- **Michael Newland:** He had found that when street lights were not working, which was a fairly frequent occurrence, he wished to point this out to the relevant authorities, but initially, he did not know whom to contact in order to do so. He found that once he knew, and contacted them, the situation was rectified rapidly. Could the Society help by informing the public about whom to contact in such situations? Others pointed out that this was a general issue –overgrown hedges, dangerous potholes in the roads and such like.
Audrey Coles pointed out that the Beaconsfield Advisory Centre (01494 672987) has this information and it was agreed that the Society could help to spread such information and encourage residents to report these issues to the relevant authorities.

There was no other business and the formal meeting closed at 20.18

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The Chairman then introduced our speakers Paul Brett, Land Director and Mark Gilpin, Planning Director, Inland Homes and invited them to give their talk – **The Future of Wilton Park – the Next Steps.**

Paul Brett pointed out that Inland Homes and SBDC had been working together to develop the Supplementary Planning Document which had been hoped would have been adopted by now, but the great amount of work entailed had delayed matters somewhat and it was to be considered by the Council on 11 December. Accordingly, they were unable to provide any specific details of the Wilton Park Development proposals. However, they could describe their company and some of the

developments in which they have been involved, explaining in general terms the way they have proceeded so far and the likely timetable in the future.

Inland Homes, is a house builder and brownfield site developer based in Amersham and confines its work to south east England. In particular it has a great deal of expertise in dealing with planning applications. It has a capital of £100m and currently has a portfolio of more than £700m. He then provided a quick survey of some of their recent work including the West Drayton development of 773 homes which had been visited by members of Wilton Park Watch who had been impressed by its quality.

Mark Gilpin then took up the story and said that around 500 people attended their Public Consultation in April this year and, apart from the number one priority in Beaconsfield, the relief road, our concerns were similar to those in other towns, the highest ranking issues being adequate access to schooling and medical care.

If the Supplementary Planning Document is accepted, this will form the basis for the proposed development and will go out for full consultation with community organisations and the public. The Document will be substantial and cover a number of issues including the development's sustainability, its impact on the habitat and environment and the social impacts.

Detailed planning can only start once this is adopted and it is anticipated that a full planning application will be submitted at the end of 2014 with a view towards a Spring start in 2015 for construction to begin. The first priority is to create adequate site access and thereafter all construction traffic will come via Pyebush roundabout.

The design team will consist of the following groups – an architectural practice, landscape architects, transport engineers, planning consultants and a communications section to ensure the public are kept informed. Separate sections may be designed and built by different companies but a design code will be created by Inland Homes to ensure a coherent feel to the development as a whole.

Paul Brett and Mark Gilpin were warmly thanked by the Chairman and applauded by the audience after which they answered the flood of questions coming from the floor insofar as they were able, bearing in mind their constraints.

Individual discussions then continued for at least another hour stimulated by the talk and sustained by the refreshments provided.

Laurence Smaje
Secretary
8 November 2013