



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for the year 2014-2015 held in the Fitzwilliams Centre, Windsor End, HP9 2JW on Thursday 5 November 2015 starting at 7.00 pm

Present: the following Committee members and approximately 110 members and guests were present.

Officers: President: Les Davies, Chairman, Mike Elliott, Treasurer: Graeme Richards, Secretary: Laurence Smaje.

Other Committee members: Tony Bristow, John Burton, Kari Dorme, Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden and Colin Mitchell.

1. Apologies for absence: Neil and Janet Boggon, Jess McEvoy, John Page, John Reid and Alison Wheelhouse.

2. Welcome by the President

The President welcomed the members and guests present and said that as there had been so much interest in the talk *The Secret History of Wilton Park* we had decided to combine the AGM with a repeat talk on a related subject – *The Secret History of Wilton Park and Latimer House* to be given at the end of the AGM by Dr Helen Fry.

3. Minutes of the 2014 AGM held on 4 November 2014

These were approved by the membership as a correct record, proposed by Deirdre Janson-Smith and seconded by Nanu Hodson.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman began by saying that the Society was in good health, both in terms of its number of successful events and its finances. Our own events - Beaconsfield Now! held on the Town Hall Green every summer, our programme of talks and visits, this year to Dorney House, the official residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer - are attracting an increasing number of participants. We are also increasingly involved in other Town issues – the development at Wilton Park through Wilton Park Watch and the A355 Relief Road and *Vision for Beaconsfield*, the preliminary to a Town Plan, on which he had been Vice Chairman and committee members had served on several working groups. Furthermore we had obtained funding for the erection of four lamp-post banner positions around the Town and two noticeboards on either side of the railway bridge for advertising local events free of charge to other organisations. Finally, as part of our *Pride in Beaconsfield* campaign we work with the Scouts for the annual litter pick and with Bucks County Council approval remove illegal and out of date signs and clean illegible notices.

We could not undertake so much activity without financial and other support and the Chairman warmly thanked the organisations which had helped us this year -The Shanly Foundation, Winkworths, Aqua Pura and Chiltern Railways. Finally, he thanked his supportive committee and others who, though not serving on the Committee, helped in other ways particularly with marketing – Jess McEvoy and Deirdre Janson-Smith and Claudia Richards.

5. Treasurers Report

Copies of the Accounts were tabled, so the Treasurer confined himself to its main features. He reiterated the statement of the Chairman that our Finances were in a good state, due partly to a slow increase in membership income but mostly from donations received and from receipts from the talks organised by Committee member Kari Dorme.

The net balance at the beginning of the year was £3586.00 and at the end, £4715.87 which speaks for itself and, there being no questions on the accounts he commended them to the Society.

Acceptance was proposed by Kari Dorme and seconded by Debbie Marsden and approved *nem con*.

6. Election of Officers and Committee.

The President took the chair for election of the Chairman and, there being no other nominations other than that of the current chairman proposed by Laurence Smaje and seconded by Kari Dorme it was approved *nem con* by members.

The Secretary was prepared to serve for a further year and there being no other nominations was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by the Committee and carried *nem con*.

The Treasurer likewise was also prepared to serve for another year and there being no other nominations was nominated by the Chairman and seconded by the Committee and carried *nem con*.

All the other members of the Committee were prepared to continue to serve and were considered en bloc. There were no other nominations and the Chairman proposed that they be elected and this was seconded by the President and approved *nem con*.

7. Announcement of Society Awards

The Chairman announced that the **Outstanding Citizen of the Year** was awarded to Sylvia Jones and he invited the President to say a few words about her. He remarked that the Award was usually given for a long standing contribution to several organisations, sometimes referred to as a 'Serial Volunteer'. Sylvia certainly deserved this description as she took over running the Beaconsfield Advisory Centre from Audrey Coles in 2007 and has been responsible for the training and management of some 100 volunteers who maintain this important service to the Town. After organising a number of smaller events she realised that something more ambitious was required and convinced the Churches, the Rotary Club, the Round Talbe and the Lions Club to support the Beaconsfield Fayre held on August Bank Holiday Monday. Next year will be its 10th Anniversary and this year some 2000 people attended, despite the rain. Sylvia has been co-chair since its beginnings and has now raised More than £100,000 for charity. Prior to this, she started a Beaver colony in 1980 in association with the 4th Beaconsfield Scouts and ran it for 17 years. Not content with all this she is involved in raising funds for St Mary's Church and Great Ormand Street Hospital and is one of 4 volunteers working for the Homeless in Slough. A serial volunteer indeed!

Sylvia was presented with her certificate by the President and in response she thanked for the Society for the honour but modestly said she felt there were others who deserved it more.

The chairman then went on to announce the winner of the **Building of the Year** and asked Graeme Richards to explain the reasoning of the Awards Sub-Committee. Generally these have been to refurbishments of significant old buildings or interesting new development but this year it has been awarded for an upgrading and re-organisation of a somewhat dilapidated bungalow at **2 Sanderswood End**. The owners, Andrew and Margaret Bridgeman already lived nearby and put in a bid for it at auction. This was beaten by a local developer who once he investigated found it had a covenant that prevented him

building more than one story high and then he re-sold it to Andrew and Margaret. They then found a local architect David Russell of and the same developer who had sold it to them to help them realise their vision of what they wanted. The old bungalow was completely modernised and re-organised to make it suitable for wheelchair-bound Margaret. It has an open plan living area and kitchen so they can chat while meals are being prepared by Andrew, doorways are wider and those off the entranceway are angled so the wheelchair can enter without difficulty and there is level access to a garden patio from the living area. There is even a portico by the front door so Margaret can enter the house from the car without difficulty or getting wet. All in all, the Awards Sub-Committee felt it had been an imaginative re-purposing of an old building to provide ideal accommodation for its owners and fully deserved the Award.

In accepting the Award, Andrew said that non-one was more surprised than he when he heard they had been selected for the award. He added that the process of re-development had been a pleasurable and creative exercise because both the architect, David Russell and the builder/developer, Richard Speed of Fine Homes, had contributed their knowledge and experience most enthusiastically.

This brought the AGM to a close at 7.30 when we were enthralled by the talk of Dr Helen Fry.