

# The Beaconsfield Society

## NEWSLETTER April 2017

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### Dates for your Diary

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Beaconsfield Now! 2017

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017 11.00 am – 2.00 pm  
Beaconsfield Rugby Club Ground, Windsor End

Litter Pick week

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> (World Environment Day) – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June at 10.00 am

Alison Uttley Week

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017

### Chairman's letter

*Mike Elliott*

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Society's newsletter describing the issues, events and activities in Beaconsfield. Planning issues continue to dominate our thoughts and, I suspect, the worries of many residents. Recognising this, the Society conducted a brief survey in the town and followed up with a public meeting in late November last year attended by over 150 people, to explore the implications of the new SBDC Local Plan 2014-2036. The Draft Plan foresees the possible release of significant areas of Green Belt land for development and an article on this will be found on later pages. The Relief Road is allegedly still on plan for completion by March 2019 – comments to Planning were submitted by us and by residents.

The Society accordingly made robust representations on the Local Plan during the SBDC consultation period and we await the next stage to see how our comments will be incorporated. We also await a detailed planning application from Inland homes for the Wilton Park site in the context of the approved Development Brief. Meanwhile, in-filling, over-sized development and multi-occupancy dwellings remain a feature of recent individual site applications. We object to the worst of these but the current atmosphere of housing shortages and quotas for every Local Planning area mean we have had limited success.

Our Annual Beaconsfield NOW! event is fast approaching at its new venue, the Rugby Club. There will be more space, easy free parking and lots more family activities to complement the showcase of local community groups and organisations in our Town. This is just one way we promote the present and I am really excited to tell you that we now have an all year round way to keeping our community up to date on what's going on in Beaconsfield. We have created a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram that can be used to promote Beaconsfield events, local businesses and interact on the challenges and opportunities in our Town. Why not look for us on social media.

For those more comfortable with traditional communication, I can say that our managed noticeboards either side of the railway bridge are in great demand – we have had over 80 applications and more than 500 different notices displayed. Our website has details of how to use this facility.

We celebrate Spring through the bulbs collaboratively planted last year – photos on an inside page!  
.....and we hope to see you at Beaconsfield NOW! and at other Society events planned in 2017.

### Coffee during the summer Farmers' Markets *Judy McDonnell*

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Following the merger of the Beaconsfield Old Town Residents Association with the Society last year, we are delighted to announce that we will be running the customary coffee mornings in the Old Town Reading Room, in conjunction with Farmers' Market Days, throughout the summer period this year.

Refreshments will be served from 9.30 a.m. – 12 noon from Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April and on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday each month until our final coffee morning of the year on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The Town Twinning Association will be in residence for the winter season from October. We look forward to seeing you there.



## **Beaconsfield Now! 2017 (6th May)**

*Debbie Marsden and Nanu Hodson*

### **BEACONSFIELD NOW! 2017 – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May – 11am-2pm - Beaconsfield Rugby Club**

**Beaconsfield Now!** is The Beaconsfield Society's annual showcase event for club, community and charity organisations, this year taking place at the Rugby Club, Oak Lodge Meadow, Windsor End HP9 2SQ.

#### **New venue, more space, more parking!**

This free, fun family event, undercover in marquees, has much to offer all ages. Dave the Donkey will be attending with his farmyard friends for a cuddle. A sit-on railway will run 35m down the touchline, available for children and adults to have a ride and discuss the finer mechanics of steam locomotion. Obviously, the Beaconsfield and District Model Railway Club and Bekonscot Model Village also have railway expertise albeit on a smaller scale.

As well as a real fire engine (emergencies permitting), John will be there with his amazing scale model and he will be delighted to share with you his fascination and knowledge of fire engines through the ages.

Do you have elderly relatives needing care? Then come and talk to the Abbeyfields Bradbury House team or investigate My Life Living Assistance, a new group to Beaconsfield.

Local news and plans can be discussed with Margaret at the Beaconsfield Town Council stall and St John's ambulance will bring Resus Annie along to show you some emergency first aid. Look out for information on the Mayor's appeal and celebrations occurring at Bekonscot on 12<sup>th</sup> May.

There is so much to find out about at our many stalls on wildlife, sports, history, local charities and activities with lots of learning opportunities as well as a chance to really get involved in your local community. We are delighted to enable them and residents to contact each other during the event.

Entertainment is varied and exciting. Waiting for visitors in the grounds of Beaconsfield Rugby Club will be vintage cars, a bouncy castle, ride-on railway, arts and crafts and drama demonstrations. Butler's Court School have been brushing up on their Maypole Dancing skills while the High March choir will be singing a selection of songs from popular shows. Over thirty students from Beaconsfield High School will be performing and the Chiltern Shakespeare Company will let you know about their summer production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Look out for some exciting play-fighting sequences during the afternoon.

11.00 am	Opening Ceremony
11.20 am	Maypole Dancing (Butlers Court School)
12 noon	High March School Choir
1.00 pm	Beaconsfield High School Wind Band
2.00 pm	Event closes

Refreshments will be available throughout with the Guides providing delicious tea and cakes and a mouth-watering barbecue lunch cooked expertly by the 4<sup>th</sup> Beaconsfield Scout Group.

More information can be found on the enclosed flyer – do show it to others.

Grateful thanks go to the generous sponsorship provided by **The Shanly Foundation** and **Beaconsfield Old Church School Charity** as well as **Winkworth's** advertising boards and lamp post banners kindly put up by **Aquapura**. Finally also of course to the **Beaconsfield Rugby Club** for their kind permission to use their ground.

We look forward to welcoming you to an informative and fun morning and early afternoon.



## **Alison Uttley, 'Spinner of Tales', creator of Little Grey Rabbit** *Kari Dorme*

### *Celebrating Beaconsfield's Past:*

**From 24 June to 1 July 2017, the Beaconsfield Society will be putting on an 'Alison Uttley Week' to raise awareness of and celebrate her work.**

It is sad to note that our town has few, if any, reminders of Alison Uttley, one of Beaconsfield's many famous authors, who lived here from 1938 to 1976. This neglect is about to be remedied. Alison was born in 1884, at Castle Top Farm in Derbyshire. A bright scholar, in 1906 she became one of the first women to graduate from Manchester University with a degree in physics. She went into teaching but, widowed early and with a young son to support, she turned to writing. Her first book for children, 'The Squirrel, the Hare and the Little Grey Rabbit' was published in 1929. It was the first of what was to become a world-famous series of charming country tales.

Alison moved to Beaconsfield in 1938, the same year as Enid Blyton. (Unfortunately, she took a great dislike to her fellow author, whom she called a 'vulgar, curled woman'.) Her house, which she named 'Thackers', still stands today in Ellwood Road. She lived there until her death in 1976, and is buried in Penn churchyard. Her headstone bears the simple but telling phrase: 'Spinner of Tales'.

Alison wrote over 100 books, most of them for children. Her works for adults include the famous semi-autobiographical 'The Country Child', 'Ambush of Young Days' and 'A Year in the Country', all drawing on her deep love and knowledge of the countryside. In 1939, she also published a popular historical novel, 'A Traveller in Time'.

The full programme for the Society's 'Alison Uttley Week' will be published soon. There will be many children's events – special story times, art and colouring competitions, displays, treasure hunts and a Little Grey Rabbit Birthday party picnic at Beaconsfield Library.

For adults, Professor Denis Judd, Alison's biographer and editor of her diaries, will give a talk on her life and work at 2.30pm on Saturday 1st July, at the Fitzwilliams Centre. Tickets will be available to our members, guests and to the general public in mid-May.

Please be sure to add the dates to your diary!

## **Planning Matters and Affordable Housing** *Alison Wheelhouse*

It continues to be a very busy time for the town not only from a building development point of view but also with important Consultations underway on topics such as release of Green Belt, the new Townscape Character Study and Heathrow Expansion (260,000 extra flights a year – over 700 extra flights per day!). The Heathrow Consultation runs until 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017. We are waiting to hear if we are to have a Unitary Council and for full details of the proposed Relief Road from Wilton Park to the A355 near Maxwell Road.

The Society submitted a Response to the Preferred Green Belt Options Consultation, conducted between October and December last year. Our Response can be read on our web-site. Originally SBDC expected to have completed their review of the responses to the Consultation by now but the responses have been such that the Council's draft Local Plan is not now expected until the autumn. A huge 'thank you' to those who submitted personal comments to the Council's consultation. The Consultation is now closed, but the Green Belt Preferred Options Document can be viewed by following this link:

<http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8628&p=0>

The Option for Beaconsfield (Preferred Option 9) can be found on page 37 with a map later in this newsletter. It is a very large area which extends way beyond the current Wilton Park area and measures 117.39 hectares. Should this Preferred Option 9 go ahead, the estimated number of dwellings is between 1,500 and 1,700, with an additional 5 hectares of "employment space". If this Preferred Option is taken forward, the Consultation document states that "an appropriate proportion of affordable housing" should be



required and that the “expectation at this stage is that at least 40% of dwellings should be affordable (i.e. have an appropriate level of subsidy)”. However, what are the rules for delivery of “Affordable Housing”? Could Affordable Housing be achieved on Beaconsfield Green Belt land?

Affordable Housing can have various meanings but the National Planning Policy Framework defines it as social rented, affordable rented or intermediate housing. There is an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which again can be found on the SBDC web-site at:

<http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/article/3699/Affordable-Housing-SPD>

This document confirms that current planning policy seeks 40% affordable housing on schemes of 5 or more units - and more on sites of 0.16 hectares and above. This document is a “material consideration in the determination of planning applications.” In particular, paragraph 6.2 of this document says that Councils “will strongly resist” schemes where an applicant has not made BEST ENDEAVOURS to deliver Affordable Housing. This includes situations where an unreasonably high price has been paid for a site or where an applicant has chosen costly design features and “seeks to argue that providing Affordable Housing ... is not financially viable.”

What we are seeing with recent planning applications for blocks of flats in the town is that developers are claiming that their schemes are not financially viable and are seeking to argue against payment of a commuted sum in lieu of providing affordable housing. An example where a developer recently obtained planning permission for 8 flats in such circumstances is 153 Amersham Road. In the Planning Officer’s Report, he accepted that the scheme was not “financially viable” for the purposes of provision of a commuted sum payment – and no overage provision was sought (why?). Another example of a similar scheme (decision awaited) is a block of 6 flats at 96 Gregories Road. The developers at both schemes are claiming that these schemes on prime Beaconsfield real estate are not financially viable for the purposes of paying an affordable housing commuted sum. If this is what is happening now, what prospect could there be for provision of affordable housing on Beaconsfield Green Belt? Would it just be the case of Green Belt being sold off, developed but no affordable housing being built on it? This would not resolve the “housing crisis”; nor amount to the “exceptional circumstances” required to justify release of Green Belt.

Where a commuted sum is paid, and particularly in more expensive areas such as Beaconsfield, the SPD allows for the money to be spent outside the area, even outside South Bucks. So, consider a scenario where Green Belt is sold off for development in Beaconsfield but no affordable housing is built there; no commuted sum is paid in lieu; or a commuted sum is paid but affordable housing is built elsewhere out of our district. Would this not be selling off the family silver for no local gain?

We say that that this system for delivery of Affordable Housing or payment of a commuted sum in lieu is simply not working. It also raises serious doubts whether affordable housing could be supplied on our Green Belt even though this was one of the principal bases of the Consultation.

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## **Enhancing the Town, celebrating its stories**     *Deirdre Smaje*

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When you next head into town, take a look around at the junction of Maxwell Road and Station Road – it should look a lot brighter! The Beaconsfield Society has recently purchased three large display boards to replace the three very dilapidated boards on the exterior wall of WH Smith on Maxwell Road.

Our aim is to use this prime site in the New Town to celebrate Beaconsfield’s natural, cultural, and community past - and present. Two of the displays will house a changing series of poster displays, while the third has been earmarked for an attractive illustrated map highlighting the many famous people and places of the town, to raise local awareness and inform visitors. We are working closely with the Beaconsfield and District Historical Society on the themes, and hope to involve other community groups over the following years.

The first themed displays will celebrate the life and work of Alison Uttley, the famous children’s book author and creator of ‘Little Grey Rabbit’ – and the subject of a special week being organised by Kari Dorme in conjunction with the Library, Bekonscot and High March School.

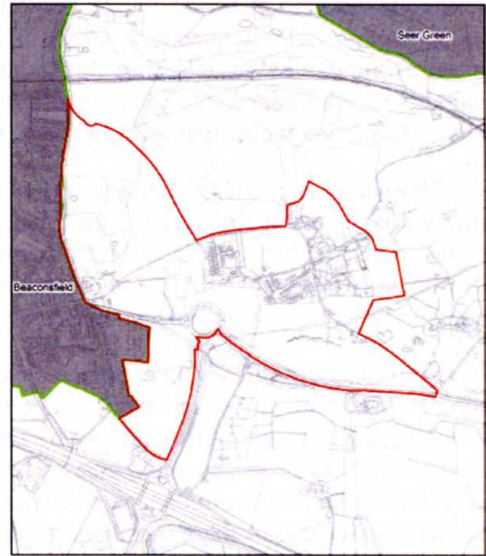
In the meantime we are creating some colourful ‘holding’ displays which we hope will attract attention and build anticipation – and maybe lead to exciting collaborations!



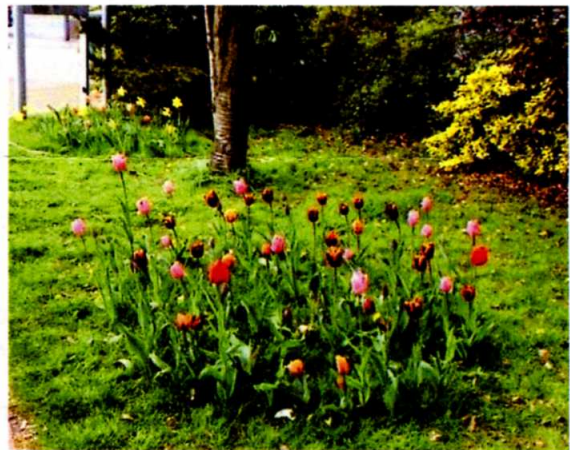
## These stories in pictures



Alison Uttley and Little Grey Rabbit



Green Belt area under threat



## Environment Group

*Jeannette Buckle*

This Spring has brought great rewards for our efforts last autumn with the mammoth bulb planting that took place. We can all now see the beautiful display of flowers coming up. Some 2500 bulbs (Crocuses, Daffodils and Tulips) provided by Beaconsfield Town Council were planted predominantly on Town Hall Green, new town and Market Garden, Old Town in October with the help of over 34 volunteers from across the town. Special thanks to Wyevale Garden Centre for donating the planters to help get the job done.

We are now making plans for the next big event, which is a Litter Pick Week starting Monday June 5th, which also happens to be World Environment Day. It's a great opportunity for your group or street to spruce things up on a day that week to suit, we can help with equipment and know-how.

The final litter pick to take place at the Town Hall Green on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June from 10 am where all are invited to join in, refreshments provided. We need your support if just for an hour, so come join in pick up tools and get picking or help with tea and biscuits and more besides. For more details check out our Facebook page and website or email: [thebecsoc@gmail.com](mailto:thebecsoc@gmail.com)



During the last year, the reach of The Society has been greatly extended through its presence on social media, another well-attended and successful public meeting, improved information on our website, the commissioning of a pair of Society notice-boards either side of the railway bridge in the New Town available for announcements by non-profit organisations and an increased membership, contribution and activity following the merger with BOTRA. Our following is growing fast – see below.

This Newsletter is one long-standing way of keeping members informed of Society activities and views on current issues potentially affecting the town, especially those triggered by local authority initiatives, consultations and forward plans. Many members have expressed an interest in receiving the Newsletter electronically and we would like to recognise the convenience that this would bring to many while at the same time keeping a watchful eye on Society expenditure.

**Newsletters by email?** We have no plans whatever to stop circulating paper copies of the Newsletter to members who still wish to receive it through their letterbox as in the past. However, **if any members would prefer to receive future issues by email**, please would they request this by sending an email, using the subject “Newsletters by email please” to [thebecsoc@gmail.com](mailto:thebecsoc@gmail.com) with the name(s) of the members in the body of the email? We will then do so for the future and also email the digital copy of this issue to confirm the method. We do not share members’ email addresses for members with others, but this could also enable Society announcements (but never advertisements!) to reach you quickly between newsletters. The committee may consider email as the principal newsletter distribution method at some time in the future.

**The Society**<http://www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk>

Patron: The Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP

President: Les Davies

Vice-President: Sandy Saunders

Executive Committee:

Chairman: Mike Elliott

Secretary: Laurence Smaje

Treasurer: Graeme Richards

Members: Jeannette Buckle, Kari Dorme, Rachel Ferguson, Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden, William Story, Alison Wheelhouse.

Associate Members: Tom Aspinall, John Burton, Jackie Dawes, Peter Foster, Judy McDonnell, Colin Mitchell, Liz Stevens. *Newsletter Editor: Tony Bristow*

All members are actively encouraged to direct those who could be interested in supporting the society to the following sources of information and become actively involved in helping to preserve and enhance our town for the benefit of present and future residents:

**Online:** [www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk)

**Email:** [thebecsoc@gmail.com](mailto:thebecsoc@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/BeaconsfieldNow](http://www.facebook.com/BeaconsfieldNow)

**800 followers and growing.....**

**Twitter:** @BeaconsfieldNow

**635 followers and growing.....**

**Instagram:** @BeaconsfieldNow

The more support we have the more effective we will be! We hope that the people that engage with us, by visiting, following and liking us, will then join us as full members in the fullness of time.

*We hope you found the Newsletter interesting and informative. Feel free to pass this on to interested neighbours and friends and do encourage them to come along to our events and become members.*