

The Beaconsfield Society NEWSLETTER May 2012

Dates for your Diary

Beaconsfield Now! 2012

Saturday 26th May 2012 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, Council Green

Robert Frost Centenary Event

Saturday 15th September 2012 2.30 pm and 6.00 pm, Fitzwilliams Centre

Information about tickets will be on the Beaconsfield Society website later in the year.

Chairman's letter

Dear Members,

I put pen to paper fresh from the Town meeting which was held on 19th April. As will be seen from the Town Clerk's minutes, which should be in the public domain before this newsletter comes through your letter box, the Mayor had to field some difficult questions. Issues covered were quite wide ranging, some vigorously presented by members of your Committee. The "debate" made particular reference to the need to update the Town Council's website, and a request to be kept informed of the progress of discussions relating to the future of the Town Hall, especially recognising residents' wishes for a central facility, easily accessible for all sections of the Community, fully incorporating residents of the Old Town and Holtspur, and reducing if not eliminating the sense of "separateness".

Indeed your Committee has been conscious of the need to ensure that a view of the concerns of each of the three Wards is well promoted when we meet. Mike Elliott, Vice Chairman and Tony Bristow, Treasurer, live in the New Town, Secretary Laurence Smaje's home is in Holtspur, and (in addition to the Chairman of BOTRA who is always invited to attend our meetings), we have now invited John Page, who is an Old Town resident, to become a full voting member on the Committee alongside Kari Dorme, Jess McEvoy, John Meredith and Graeme Richards.

The agenda items for the Society's committee meetings always include a review of planning applications; in the event that an application comes forward which conflicts with our remit from you of safeguarding our heritage or which invades an area of outstanding natural beauty, we put forward our reasoned objections to SBDC. In this regard, I am pleased to report that our last submission (in relation to an application to build on land at Gregories Farm Lane) was upheld by the Planning Officer at Capswood, although it has since been the subject of an appeal.

We have now re-branded the traditional Awareness Day into **Beaconsfield Now! 2012**, which we hope will present a more vibrant picture of life today in Beaconsfield. Jess McEvoy a new Committee member had taken the lead in mustering local organisations keen to display the activities of their organisations, and attract new participants.

This is covered more fully below, as are other items we think are of interest to you such as the centenary celebration of Robert Frost's arrival in Beaconsfield in 1912. This is a year of many exciting local events to mark national occasions and important Town initiatives. I do hope that members will support these both personally and through the Society.

I am now in the last of my 5 years serving you as your Chairman, so I take this opportunity of thanking you most sincerely for your support and I hope to see as many of you as possible on the Green on 26th May.



Yours sincerely,
Sandy Saunders

The Beaconsfield Society has renamed its Awareness Day as '**Beaconsfield Now! 2012**' to reflect, on one day each year, the changing face of the town and to provide a 'snapshot' of the wide variety of activities available.

Beaconsfield Now! 2012, currently in its 19th year, brings together a range of voluntary-run clubs and societies, as well as local interest & support groups, all in one venue, to showcase activities in Beaconsfield, for residents to find out what's on offer in our town and why/how to be involved. It is on the Council Green from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.

This year, about 40 local voluntary organisations and societies will be taking part with bouncy castles and family entertainment. **Great fun for all the family. Lots of local information. Be at the heart of our community!**

'Like' us on Facebook to keep updated: www.facebook.com/BeaconsfieldSociety.

Robert Frost Centenary Event

15th September 2012

Did you know that Robert Frost, one of America's greatest poets, came with his family to live in Reynolds Road, Beaconsfield in September 1912?



*With thanks to the Frost Partnership
for their generous sponsorship*



He stayed for two years during which time he had his first two books of poems published, before being published and recognised in America. Frost loved walking in the area and derived much inspiration from the Chilterns. Though the family moved to Gloucestershire in 1914, and subsequently back to the United States, Frost did visit Beaconsfield in later years such was his affection for the town.

To commemorate the centenary of his arrival in Beaconsfield, there will be a performance of "*The English Years of Robert Frost*" by Linda Hart and Gabriel Woolf. Linda (an American who has lived in England for many years, and written and lectured on Robert Frost both here and there) will outline Frost's time over here, while Gabriel (a well-known and admired actor, literary performer and frequent reader on Radio 4) will read the poems and letters written by Frost that help to bring the story vividly to life. Together they will describe how Frost found his cottage in Beaconsfield, found a publisher in London, and befriended many writers including Edward Thomas and W.B. Yeats.

The celebration will take place with performances **in the Fitzwilliams Centre on Saturday 15 September at 2.30pm and at 6.00 pm.** In addition to the performances, there will be a display on Robert Frost at Beaconsfield Library, including a special collection of his poetry and prose as well as biographies of his life.

Town Matters

Several members of the Society's Committee attended the Annual Town Meeting held by the Town Council on 19th April. On behalf of the Beaconsfield Society Jess McEvoy gave an enthusiastic description of how it was hoped that **Beaconsfield Now! 2012** would be on the *must-attend* agenda for Beaconsfield. As before, it would provide a showcase for local charities and organisations but, with strong marketing and new attractions, it expects to attract a new and wider audience, using *Facebook* as a medium for attracting the younger members of the community.

In the formal meeting chaired by The Mayor, Mr Richard Keith, a robust discussion developed, which clearly indicated serious concern in the community about an apparent lack of transparency in Council proceedings. The response was that the Council published accounts of its activities on public notice boards, but the meeting was critical that Minutes of Council meetings were not quickly published on their website and that it lacked photographs of the new 2011 Council members. The meeting also questioned why the options being discussed on the future of the Town Hall were not in the public domain and why it was taking so long to come to a conclusion. There was also questioning of the Council's inadequate methods for public consultation, an apparent lack of transparency in publishing the Council's strategic vision for the Town, if such exists, and plans for Walkwood, litter and parking.

The Beaconsfield Society hopes that, in collaboration with other community organisations, improved communication with the Council can emerge. As the Mayor observed, only 32 members of the public, out of a town population of 11,000, attended the meeting. We are sure that the Beaconsfield Society's members have a voice.