

The Beaconsfield Society NEWSLETTER November 2011

Annual General Meeting

Fitzwilliams Centre
Thursday 26th January 2012 at 7.30 pm
Speaker: Councillor Mrs Jacquetta Lowen-Cooper
Chairman - SBDC Planning Committee
Refreshments (wine and soft drinks) will be provided

Chairman's letter

Dear Member,

Another year has passed since my last note to you, and with the change of Government there have been many new issues raised, not least the initiative taken by the Prime Minister in promoting the "Big Society".

I am sorry to have to refer to the sad death of our former President, John Gorton, after countless years of outstanding service to the Town in so many roles, in particular to your Society. On behalf of you all I have sent Juliet our warmest sympathy. I took over as your Chairman in 2008. During my Stewardship the committee has seen the resignations of Dermot Cox, Jackie Dawes, Kay Rogers and Mike Harrison, whose loyalty and contributions have been most appreciated. I have also welcomed a number of new faces including Tony Bristow, Mike Elliott and John Meredith. They join me in our disappointment that there was insufficient support this year to hold the Awareness Day, but subject to the views of members (see below), we are planning to arrange an event in 2012, perhaps in a somewhat different format. Similarly we were unable to organise our annual visit to a local venue of interest to our members, but we will re-instate some form of social event next year once members make their preferences known to us. We are also considering the implications of the new culture suggested by Downing Street, and the remaining paragraphs of this note are a summary of our current thinking.

THE CHARACTER OF BEACONSFIELD

By common consent, Beaconsfield is already a good place to live. It is almost entirely surrounded by Green Belt land, a most precious asset and a major 'plus' to those who are resident in the town. It offers a wide range of first-class schools within reach, it is large enough to have a viable retail/commercial sector, it has excellent transport links and above all it can offer a pleasant residential area at many price levels with few environmental threats and relatively low crime rates.

The Town has a number of societies and clubs supported by enthusiastic and dedicated members, but some may lack the critical mass of participants to make them really viable; there is only informal co-ordination to make the optimum use of the available resources. Many residents do not actually work in the town in full-time jobs; most commute to larger centres of commerce and industry in the Thames Valley corridor and in Greater London. Thus involvement in community affairs is limited for many who, on returning home each day, enjoy their immediate surroundings and family life. This may have led to a weaker collective town spirit than is ideally contemplated by the Big Society, yet the community needs to act cohesively in making the most of our assets and to fight longer term threats.

THE ROLE OF THE BEACONSFIELD SOCIETY

During the last two years your committee has made significant contributions to the debate on the Town's future by supporting the campaign against the Incinerator at Wapsey's Wood, and by monitoring on a regular basis all planning applications, and where appropriate submitting objections to the District Council.

In addition, the committee has previously organised annual visits to local venues of interest to its members. A few members have made known their views informally on any issues of concern. We have also helped to facilitate the preparation of the Parish Appraisal, which was independently published more than two years ago. Since then there has been little public debate on the issues raised, and the report, which is still available to be viewed at the Town Hall, has lain on a shelf gathering dust.

The Committee has been reviewing whether the Society's current role best reflects the wishes or indeed the interests or needs of its members and wishes to review this at the AGM. In order to have an informed debate, the Committee would be grateful if you would complete the simple questionnaire overleaf. In order to give time for analysing the results, it would be helpful if it could be returned by 13th January 2012. The analysis, including the % return, will be presented to members at the AGM.

Yours sincerely

Sandy Saunders

Annual Awards

Each year, the Society makes an award in the two categories described below. If you would like to make a nomination in either category, please make your recommendation to the Chairman, Sandy Saunders, on 01494 675586 or email him at sandysaunders@btconnect.com no later than 4th January 2012.

Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award

This award is in recognition of the work of an individual person who over a number of years has made a significant contribution to the life of the Beaconsfield community as a whole.

Outstanding Building of the Year Award

This award is in recognition of what the Society considers to be the outstanding design for a building erected or modified in Beaconsfield in the past year. It may include any class of building.

Nominations for the Committee and Officers

Nominations for the Officers of the Society and as Committee members are sought and will be voted upon at the AGM. The Officers are: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Current Officers (where appointed) retire annually in accordance with the Society's constitution, and new nominations for each post will be considered alongside any existing Officer standing for re-election.

Nominations for additional Committee members are also welcomed. If you would like to make a nomination either as Officer or Committee member, please make your recommendation to the Chairman, Sandy Saunders, on 01494 675586 or email him at sandysaunders@btconnect.com no later than 4th January 2012.

We hope to see you at the AGM!

Do bring a friend; he/she would be most welcome.