

The Beaconsfield Society

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2005 HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE TOWN HALL, BEACONSFIELD ON THURSDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2005 AT 8.00 PM

1) Welcome by the President

John Gorton welcomed the members present and the guest speaker Steve Mellor, Director of Planning, Michael Shanly Group. John said how we must work with other groups for the environment of Beaconsfield and how the civic societies become the common denominator for towns such as ours, especially with the general pressures on the green belt and building development in the area.

A big thank you was given to David Davies, a very energetic Chairman of the Society, who has now relocated to Wales.

A thank you to Alan Green who had chaired the meetings since David left.

As Les Davies, who has served the Society so well for many years, is now standing down from the committee, John proposed Les as Vice President for an initial term of five years and Shirley Scrivener seconded the proposal. This was carried unanimously. John said that although Les would no longer be on the committee, we would still have access to his experience and good sense and he was thanked for all he has done for the Society.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Michael Harrison, J Koderich, Mr & Mrs Lathom-Sharpe and Kay Rogers,

3) Minutes of last AGM and matters arising

The minutes of the 2004 AGM were proposed to be taken as read by Nick Harrandell and seconded by Henry Wilson. There were no matters arising.

4) Chairman's report

Alan Green reported that it had been an interesting year, with several highs and one or two lows. The membership numbers were similar to those of a year ago, up by a few households.

Meetings had been held for members addressed by Gill Gowing, Director of Planning at Chiltern D.C. on the subject of Government changes in Planning Policy, and by Gary Bartlett of Bucks C.C. transportation department on an update to the Beaconsfield Transportation Study. The first was well attended, but the second had a very low attendance. The Chairman told members that he hoped they would take the opportunity, later in the meeting, to tell the committee the sort of subjects they would like to be featured in future.

Dick Smith, our Town Crier, had led another informative walk for members along one of the Ends in the Old Town and two litter blitzes had taken place in the year, although the volunteer help from members had been very limited.

Another interesting day had been held with SID (a Speed Indicator Device) which had shown that many of the Town's motorists considered speed limits to be advisory only, not the maximums intended.

A very successful Awareness Day was held, with 50 participating organisations, and thanks were due to David Davies and Les Davies for all the hard work they put in to make this such a feature event for the Town.

Another most successful event was the Heritage Day visit to Hall Barn, hosted by the Hon. Jenefer Farncombe who made our members very welcome. This event was over-subscribed and we had to have a waiting list, so this may be an indication that other similar visits could be what appeal to our membership.

Additional and replacement trees had been funded by a grant from SBDC and it is hoped that this will be repeated in 2006.

A meeting was held with 6 other organisations in the Town to discuss matters of mutual interest. Planning applications have been monitored and objected to or supported in accordance with the mandate given by members. The current government planning policy is for greater consultation, although it is suspected that some of this is merely going through the motions. How much notice is actually taken of the views of interested parties is open to debate. The committee has ensured, however, that we are fully consulted where appropriate and are responding accordingly. During the year Hampden Hill has been designated a conservation area, and a public consultation is now in progress to review the existing Old Town conservation area. Reference was made to the MSA at jct. 2 of the M40 and the possibility of having a new Fire Station and Search and Rescue Centre on the A40. Both of these would be on green belt land which, as a precedent, causes no little concern. The Chairman reported the sad death of Edna Greenwood, a past treasurer of this Society. He paid tribute to the hard work by the committee and the active members throughout the year and commended the two co-opted members, Kay Rogers and Dermot Cox, to the meeting. Tribute was paid to David Davies, who has moved to Wales, for all his efforts on the Society's behalf. Similarly, thanks were due to Les Davies for all his hard work over many years and gratitude expressed that he had agreed to continue to serve the Society as an active member. The Chairman closed by expressing the need to increase membership and by asking for any suggestions to mark next year's 40th anniversary.

5) Treasurer's report

Nick Harrandell reported that membership levels were about the same as last year and the increased subscriptions were coming through, although many members had not yet changed their standing orders to the new rate. Subscription income was up approximately £400 from last year at £1475. The large expenditure this year was on the new brochures at £788 and these will have a life of about 3 more years before reprint.

Newsletters, flyers, printing and postage remained the largest recurring expense at £380. By comparison, last year's expenditure for these items was £491, but it is in fact a similar expense, it is merely that this year the cost has been apportioned more accurately.

Awareness Day, our biggest event of the year, cost £118. Public Liability insurance is mainly to cover this event and is a significant cost at £190.

Our overall position remains the same with the effects of increased (but not fully recovered) subscriptions and the unusual expenditure on the new brochure.

Accounts were adopted, proposed by Alan Green and seconded by Geoff Grover.

Nick thanked George Foden for overseeing the compilation of the Society's accounts.

6) Presentation of Society's awards

Alan Green introduced Geoff Grover for the tribute to Sgt. Gerry Lister. Geoff said how we felt safer in our houses with Gerry's presence in the Town, how Gerry worked closely with the community and the youth of Beaconsfield and for all his achievements for the Town. Sgt Gerry Lister was, therefore, the Outstanding Citizen of the Year and Geoff presented Gerry with his certificate.

Shirley Scrivener was introduced to the members and said that the reasons for the Outstanding Building of the Year being awarded to the Huf Haus, 17 Grove Road, included the method of construction and the environmentally friendly and energy efficient design. Incorporating a basement, the footprint was reduced and did not impinge on neighbours and the street scene. It took 7 months from planning permission being granted to taking possession. Mrs Liz Perry, the owner, had been closely involved in the design process and was presented with the certificate.

7) Election of Officers and Committee

Alan Green asked the President to supervise the election of Chairman.

Chairman - Alan Green proposed by Les Davies seconded by Michael Harrison.

Election of Officers passed back to Alan Green.

Vice Chairman - Dermot Cox proposed by Alan Green seconded by Geoff Grover.

Treasurer - Nick Harrandell proposed by Shirley Scrivener seconded by Doug Manocha.

Secretary - Michael Harrison proposed by Nick Harrandell seconded by Fred Clough.

Committee - Alan Green informed members that no additional nominations had been received for the committee and proposed a vote en-bloc for Jackie Dawes, Doug Manocha, Kay Rogers and Shirley Scrivener.

Proposed by Alan Green seconded by Michael Harrison

All officers and committee members were elected unanimously.

Alan Green paid tribute to Geoff Grover as the Town Council appointed representative on the committee. The mutual benefits were mentioned, with Geoff able to keep the committee informed of any new local government legislation and District Council proposals and also to pass on to the Town Council particular concerns of Society members.

8) Discussion on Priorities for The Society

Alan introduced the new vice chairman, Dermot Cox, who led a discussion on priorities the members perceived for The Society. This prompted a general discussion on matters affecting the Town.

One of the things Dermot raised was the problem of parking in the Old Town. Jackie Dawes said that BOTRA has been working on this for many years, to no avail.

A member raised a concern that we may lose the Town Hall, there are no bookings being taken by the Registrar for marriages after May 2007. (The lease from SBDC expires in June 2007.) Kari Dorme proposed a campaign against the closure, seconded by Mike Adams.

Dermot mentioned the proposed additional zebra crossings in the New Town, but it was reported that following many objections, the County Council had now withdrawn the proposal. The members present seemed to agree that this proposal had been undesirable.

The Old Town traffic lights proposal for London End and the roundabouts for the Amersham Road/Ledborough Lane junction, together with the expansion of the railway bridge over Station Road were not going ahead as the County Council did not have the funding available. It was advised that we might learn more at another public Local Transport planning meeting on November 30th.

The chairman confirmed to members that it was intended to send out a questionnaire to establish their priorities and requirements with the next Society newsletter.

9) Other Business

There was no other business and the formal part of the meeting was completed at 9 p.m.

Alan Green then asked Les Davies to introduce the speaker Steve Mellor. He gave members a very interesting and amusing talk on experiences as a Property Developer in the Beaconsfield Area. Les thanked Steve for his talk.

Alan Green thanked the members for coming and invited them to partake in a glass of wine or soft drink and to discuss anything of interest with the committee.