

The Beaconsfield Society

NEWSLETTER September 2014

Dates for your Diary

Beaconsfield Society Heritage Visit 2014 – Taplow Court

Wednesday 1st October 2014 2.00 pm

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 4th November 2014 7.00 pm

St Teresa's Parish Centre, Warwick Road

Speaker: Councillor Ruth Vigor-Hedderly, Cabinet Member for Transport, BCC

Refreshments (wine and soft drinks) will be provided

Chairman's letter

Mike Elliott

Celebrating the past, promoting the present and influencing the future of Beaconsfield are definitely what we are doing. The Society has been very active in recent months and this bumper edition of the newsletter makes good reading, I commend it to you. We remain major contributors to Wilton Park Watch, we organised Beaconsfield Now! to another record year and have been involved in various commemorative and "Pride in Beaconsfield" initiatives. Detailed reports are given below.

This year has flown by and our AGM is only a few weeks away. We are delighted to have Ruth Vigor-Hedderly – the newly appointed Cabinet member for Transportation at BCC as our guest speaker. The proposed relief road, HS2 impact, commuter traffic and cycle routes are many of the issues on the top of TBS agenda so this is a great opportunity to learn more from a local County Councillor. Do come a join us on the evening, non-members and guests are also most welcome. Another upcoming event is the heritage visit to Taplow Court.

The reasons to be a member of the Society have never been stronger, and I thank you for your continued support. Please share this message with friends and neighbours who care about Beaconsfield and encourage them to join us and make our voice all the stronger. We are always looking for sub-committee members to get involved, the key requirement being a passion for the town both now and for the future. If you, or someone you know, may be interested then maybe a chat in one of our burgeoning number of coffee shops would be a good place to start.

Enjoy the newsletter and I hope to see you at the heritage visit or AGM in the coming weeks.

Pride in Beaconsfield - Signage and street clutter

The Society remains vigilant to the worst excesses of flyposting, illegal signage and fixings adorning the street furniture, pavements and verges around the Town. Commercial organisations require planning permission for signage but voluntary groups may promote events up to two weeks beforehand at designated points in the town including our new lamppost banner positions (see below). A working party was out in the spring and plan to do so again in the autumn.

Pride in Beaconsfield – Litter Pick

A working party from the Society joined the Scouts and other volunteers in torrential rain to "find the litter that others don't seem to find!" Our coverage included access routes to the station, open spaces and footpaths. A remarkable 201 kilos of rubbish was collected during the week. A thankful passing resident of Caledon Road said he had lived there for 20 years and it was the first time he had seen volunteers cleaning up the path to Maxwell road. Well done to the Scouts for organising the activity.

Members of your Society's committee continue to make a major contribution to Wilton Park Watch, an association of several community groups within the town seeking to maximise benefit to existing residents. SBDC received more than 200 responses to their consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that sets out the framework within which Wilton Park will be developed. WPW made a significant submission that can be viewed in full on the Society's website. Our comments included many points on the development itself but centred around the overall pressure on infrastructure:

- Traffic impacts on Beaconsfield as a whole not merely the site and London End.
- Rail focusing on Beaconsfield rather than Seer Green as the likely station of choice.
- Pedestrian and Cyclist provision to be definitive rather than aspirational
- Public transport, practical and sustainable bus access to the site
- Sewerage, Household waste and Power capacity
- Education provision
- Health Care provision

SBDC is preparing a response to the consultation and a revised SPD. We expect this will be presented to SBDC Sustainable Development committee in the autumn and further approved by the SBDC cabinet soon after. This will inform and condition any proposals from the developer in their subsequent detailed planning application(s).

There have been further moves regarding the MOD disposal of the site. Inland Homes, the preferred bidder, announced in June that they had completed the purchase from the MOD. Meanwhile, Jansons sought leave to challenge the MOD disposal process in the High Court. After an initial refusal, Jansons were granted permission to lodge a legal challenge. Clearly this introduces some uncertainty and probably delay into the project.

In its consultation submission WPW stated clearly that "WPW believes development must not proceed unless and until a relief road is built". We are pleased to report some reasons for optimism that a relief road may actually come to fruition. A Local Enterprise Forum bid for Government monies was successful so BCC have £9.2M from April 2015 to improve the A355. Inland Homes, the new owners of Wilton Park have submitted a planning application for a section of road all the way across their land from Pyebush roundabout to a point to the North of Minerva Way. This proposed road is of a standard to operate without modification as the first section of a relief road. WPW are very encouraged by this since this road would allow ingress and egress to the Wilton Park site without any impact to London End, both during the construction phase and in the future.

There is still some way to go before we can be confident of a positive result from this project, not least of which is the form and sustainability of the "Community hub" referred to in the SPD. WPW will remain fully engaged on your behalf. We have had very positive meetings with both the developers involved and welcome their willingness to listen to our concerns. WPW objective remains focused on the best outcome for the Town residents present and future.

The WW1 Literary Event and Commemoration

Kari Dorme

A performance of Behind the Lines on Saturday 12th April 2014 at the Fitzwilliams Centre

The heroism, horror, suffering and sacrifice of conflict were brought to life at a special literary event on 12th April 2014 in Beaconsfield to mark the Great War centenary. Gabriel Woolf and Linda Hart read a wide variety of poetry, prose and song of those who supported the War, those who hated the War – young and old, men and women, combatants and observers. It portrayed what people thought at home and what soldiers experienced at the Front.

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Quotes from members of the audience

"I thoroughly enjoyed 'Behind the Lines'. A sensitive, well-paced production cleverly incorporating diary records and newspaper snippets along with well-chosen poems. Linda Hart and Gabriel Woolf brought the poetry to life, their polished presentation, choice of material encompassing occasional songs and poignant pauses was thought provoking. An evening we won't forget and great introduction to the celebrations/remembrance of the First World War. A hard act to follow. Well done and thank you "

"We really experienced the horrors and hopes as well as the futility and the comradeship, from the heartfelt words of the time. The compilation carefully put together by Linda Hart and Gabriel Woolf interwove the views of participants, families, reporters, writers and even humourists, all presented and delivered with their enthralling professionalism. We found that the words from back home were just as moving as those from the front. We all know of the Great War but we cannot know it; tonight, though, we really felt it."

Mike Elliott, Chairman of the Beaconsfield Society, said:

"Thankfully, most of us can only imagine what war is like. This thought-provoking assembly of readings and verse gave insight into the adventure, patriotism, heroism, horror, suffering and sacrifice of the Great War."

Kari Dorme, committee member and organiser, commented:

"We had great audiences for both performances who enjoyed and experienced all the contrasts and mixtures of emotions of the poetry, letters and songs. There was enthusiasm for war, there was bitterness and horror expressed, there was humour and some laughter too. People appreciated and followed the comprehensive printed program that listed all readings; many would go home and re-read their favourite WW1 poems".

Soldier poet Julian Grenfell's poems were featured and this was linked to the Beaconsfield branch of the Grenfell family and Julian's twin cousins. An insert to the printed program gave a short summary of the Grenfell connection with information about Beaconsfield's VC hero Capt. Francis Grenfell and his twin brother Riversdale both of whom were killed in the war.

As an extra to the proceedings, the Rector of St. Mary's (Rev Dr. Jeremy Brooks) who was in the audience, kindly kept the church open into the evening so that anyone who was interested could look at the Grenfell , and all the other war memorials in the church.

WW1 Centenary Commemoration Day for Beaconsfield on Sunday 3rd August 2014.

(Written on behalf of the Beaconsfield WWI Centenary Working Group)

A parade of Scouts, Air and Army cadets left from the Rugby Club in Windsor End to arrive just before noon for a wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial, led by Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP and by the Mayor Steve Jones, followed by an equally fully-attended service in St. Mary and All Saints church. As part of the act of remembrance the names of all 80 were read out and candles lit.

It is hard for us to appreciate the consequence of the appalling loss of life suffered on all sides during the First World War. Almost every town and village in Britain was bereaved. Husbands, sons, and brothers all volunteers, paid the ultimate sacrifice for their patriotism. They were faced with the horrors of the trenches, mown down by machine gun fire and poisoned by gas. Some have no known graves, some died at home of their wounds but most are buried in foreign soil.

There are 80 names of the fallen on the Beaconsfield war memorial including three sets of brothers killed. The Grenfell twins Francis and Riversdale have a stained glass memorial window in St. Mary's church. Captain Francis Grenfell was one of the first officers to gain the coveted Victoria Cross on the 24th August 1914. Other war memorials in the church are dedicated to Captain Sir Edward Hulse and Lieutenant William Lawson nephews of Viscount Burnham of Hall Barn. Both were killed in their twenties in Flanders.

To discover more about the names on the Beaconsfield war memorial, go to the Buckinghamshire Remembers website www.buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk. This is an excellent research tool; for every name you can discover their rank, full name, age when killed, parents' names and addresses. Many were born and lived in Beaconsfield; it is poignant indeed to read road names that we know today - Aylesbury End, Shepherd's Lane, Baring Road, Curzon Avenue, Hedgerley Lane, Lakes Lane and Candlemas Lane.

PS. There will be a free talk in the Beaconsfield Library on Wednesday 24th September from 2.30 to 3.30 pm by Kari Dorme and Rev Dr Jeremy Brooks entitled "Beaconsfield WW1 heroes and their memorials".

The Beaconsfield Society's **Beaconsfield Now!** event, took place on June 14th supported by The Shanly Foundation. This annual event showcases not for profit organisations and their contribution to Beaconsfield life. The Town Council Green was full to capacity.

We were delighted that Sheila Newland, the Beaconsfield Society's Citizen of the Year was our guest of honour and opened the event. Dick Smith our Town Crier was also present and welcomed everyone on a warm sunny day. Bob Massie introduced many of our stall holders and encouraged them to say a few words about their organisations. The Beaconsfield and District Model Railway Club, Beacon Centre, Churches Together Beaconsfield, St Mary and All Saints Bell Ringers, U3A and Carers Trust were new to the event and enlightened many visitors as to their activities. We were lucky to have a bouncy slide, real fire engine, craft activity stall and Japanese activities stall for our younger visitors. The latter were raising funds for their Scout Jamboree visit to Japan planned for 2015.

Ben Senator, Connor Fitzgibbon and Tallulah Thomas, better known as 'Far Side', entertained us throughout the event. Visitors listened to the music while enjoying the Scout and Guides' delicious food.

Beaconsfield Now! is a thriving event with a good number of local visitors who enjoy learning more about what happens in Beaconsfield. Stall holders enjoyed meeting other organisations and there were many exchanges of ideas. Dominic Grieve our MP also attended and spoke with a number of organisation representatives.

The annual survey this year asked visitors about parking in Beaconsfield. The results revealed that locals certainly felt that parking was an issue especially in the Old Town. Suggestions included extra parking provision with added second storey car park spaces as well as long- stay specified parking areas for commuter/office workers. Varied parking restriction notices to stop commuters or business workers from parking on residential streets was also popular. A park and ride was also felt would be of help in the Old Town. Enforcement of any restrictions was agreed to be a general concern. Overwhelmingly it was felt that cost paid a crucial part in the parking issues. There was a desire to have 20 minutes of low cost or free parking in the main car parks and then a differently priced long stay parking area as well. The Wilton Park development will put more pressure on traffic and parking and therefore a well-planned co-ordinated understanding as to how best to improve the situation now and in the future is needed.

The Beaconsfield Society committee is beginning to plan for next year and we already have 3 new interested stall holders waiting for their registration forms.

We would like to thank all the supporting organisations that make this event such a success.

Street Banners for Not-for-Profit organisations*Nanu Hodson*

It is with delight that we can announce that the Beaconsfield Society has purchased banner fixings for four lamp posts around Beaconsfield Town centre. The vertical banners will be a replacement for the cross road banner the fixings of which are no longer safe.

The Beaconsfield Society will co-ordinate the banner displays and any not-for-profit organisation wanting to advertise forthcoming events will be able to do so. We are also delighted to announce that we have generous sponsorship from Aqua Pura window cleaners who will put up and take down banners at no additional cost.

The banners themselves will need to be 2000mm high x 600mm wide. An example of one of the Society's banners in this format is shown opposite. We can suggest a few companies who will manufacture banners (and design them if needed at an affordable price).

For further details please contact Nanu Hodson 01494 673921.....

Summer Events



Beaconsfield Now! on the Council Green (above and left)

The Enid Blyton Plaque, commissioned by the Beaconsfield Society, which was unveiled on 7th May 2014 (below left)

Behind the Lines (below)



Food for Thought



All levels of government employ public consultations from time to time. In many cases, this is to follow a statutory obligation yet the response rate from the public is usually very low. How could this be and should members of the public do better? Here are some typical comments about such consultations:

“I didn’t even know about it – I never received a letter or noticed it in the local paper”

“I heard about it, but it’s too difficult to find it, read the relevant hundred pages of blurb and to respond”

“I didn’t know that a brief exhibition was being held”

“They only consult to justify a decision already committed”

“There’s no point in responding because it is or will be rigged”

“They never ask the questions that I want to answer on this proposal”

“The majority of people affected are never notified”

“Someone else is bound to write in – that should do”

“If only I had thought about the hidden consequences, I would have said something”

“If they have found the money to do it, they’ll just do it anyway”

The fact is that we all can make a difference and could ensure that our apathy does not give the authorities implied approval to do whatever they wish, even to our, or to our community’s, disadvantage.

There have been several recent consultations in and affecting the town. Some of them, such as Wilton Park where SBDC has been assisted by the probable developer, can be regarded as successful from the attendance and responses; The Society helped this by organising two large public meetings of its own through Wilton Park Watch. HS2 probably gave consultations a very bad name in that one was held along the whole route, 80% of respondents voted NO yet the government proceeded with miniscule modification!

The Beaconsfield Cycleway expenditure was consulted upon over Christmas and the New Year, under pressure to spend £200,000 by 5th April but letters had only been sent to residents alongside cycle changes and not to the thousands of drivers whose multiple journeys through the New Town daily will be lengthened by several new traffic-slowng obstacles; the Society led with detailed comments which did result in a few alleviations, all of which we had suggested. The Old Town land-swap parking proposal was (maybe surprisingly) rejected by popular vote. Wattleton Road is calmer after measures which followed consultation. Many residents will recall the Waste Incinerator proposal alongside the A40 and the huge public response generated by action group publicity; the fact is that we have no incinerator at Wapsey’s Wood.

Watch out for possible forthcoming consultations on planning applications at Wilton Park, New Town parking, Waste transfer stations, HS2 construction and, most importantly the A355 improvement scheme (incorporating a Relief Road East of the town). We must not assume that proposals are the best possible and should especially be alert for unexpected side-effects. Local papers do their best, but we need to take note and take part. BCC and SBDC consultations could affect the town most; see full details on their websites.

The Society’s Committee is sometimes able to secure informal meetings with the authorities concerned, and has recently done so in connection with Wilton Park, Beaconsfield Cycleways and a possible Relief Road. These are of necessity informal in order not to prejudice the ‘democratic’ process, but our own thinking has been informed and residents’ concerns planted in the minds of officers involved, with positive results.

The fact is that there is much more a culture of public engagement these days than there ever was for past generations and hence there is an opportunity to influence decisions if we each take the chance offered. The Society is a strong voice that needs your and new members’ support, but personal responses are vital.

Even if most consultations may appear to be biased in favour of some new idea, we as individuals CAN make a difference. The number of discrete comments and votes always carries weight. Public apathy is always the strongest vote in any consultation. Please HAVE YOUR SAY instead. Your vote does count.

Heritage Visit to Taplow Court 1st October 2014 John Burton

This year our Heritage Visit will be to Taplow Court on Wednesday 1st October at 2pm; please meet in reception after having parked beforehand (see directions below).



Taplow Court is a large Victorian mansion adjacent to Taplow Village overlooking the Thames just north of Maidenhead. The property was purchased by the Grenfell family in 1852 and became the home of the poet Julian Grenfell and his brother Billy both of whom lost their lives during the First World War; a memorial to their memory stands in the gardens. The interior of the house has been beautifully restored in keeping with the Victorian/Edwardian era. In a main reception room there are large murals devoted to the Grenfell sons. Also in the grounds is a Saxon burial mound; it was excavated in 1883, unearthing a number of early Saxon treasures near the Grenfell memorial. Since 1988 the mansion has been the Soka Gakki Buddhist Centre.

Taplow Court is located in Cliveden Road (postcode SL6 0ER) just before reaching Taplow village. Passing Cliveden continue towards Taplow for about three miles and the mansion will be found on the right hand side. Take the second entrance which lies back from the road. After entering the site the car park will be found on the right hand side within what was once a walled garden; please park a little before 2.00 pm.

There will be no charge for members; their guests are invited for which a donation of £10 is requested which will include a one year membership of the Beaconsfield Society. Refreshments are not available at Taplow Court itself but tea can be obtained at the nearby Grovefield Hotel in Taplow Common Road (SL1 8ER).

The Committee would like to introduce car sharing for this visit. Please indicate on the slip below whether you can offer transport to other members. Anyone requiring transport should contact John Burton (Tel: 01494 538206, E-mail: jgb_burton @ hotmail .com).

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TAPLOW COURT VISIT – 1st OCTOBER 2014

I/We wish to book ___ places for the Taplow Court visit. I/We will be accompanied by ___ guests for whom a donation of £10 per person is requested. (Cheques should be made payable to The Beaconsfield Society)

I/We are/are not able to offer transport to other members.

I/We would appreciate if possible/do not need transport to attend.

Name.....Address.....Tel.No.....

Please return to John Burton, 11, Gibson Road, High Wycombe, HP12 4QW (01494 538206) *not later than Wednesday 17th September*

Annual General Meeting Wednesday 4th November 2014 7.00 pm

**The Annual General Meeting for the year 2013/2014
will be held in St Teresa's Parish Centre, Warwick Road
on Tuesday 4th November 2014 starting at 7.00 p.m.**

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Welcome by the President
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last AGM and matters arising not covered below
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Officers and Committee
7. Presentation of the Society's awards
8. Any other business

The meeting will be followed by a talk by our Guest Speaker:

Councillor Ruth Vigor-Hedderly, Cabinet Member for Transport, BCC

Refreshments will be available after the talk with time to meet the Speaker and the Committee.

All are welcome and members are encouraged to bring guests!

NOTES

The current Committee is as follows:

President: Les Davies

Vice-President: John Page

Chairman: Mike Elliott

Secretary: Laurence Smaje

Treasurer: Graeme Richards

Members: Tony Bristow, John Burton, Kari Dorme, Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden, Colin Mitchell

If you would like to make any other nomination either as Officer or Committee member, or for either of the Society's awards below, please make your recommendation to the Secretary, Laurence Smaje, on 01494 681165, or email him at laurence@smaje.co.uk or by sending him the tear-off strip below, not later than Monday 20th October 2014.

Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award - 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 - in recognition of what the Society considers to be the outstanding design for a building (of any class) erected or modified in Beaconsfield in the past year.

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- Do you have a nomination for Citizen of the Year? Please give their name and contact details

- Do you have a nomination for Outstanding Building? Please give their name and location details

Your name.....Address.....Tel.No.....

Please send to the Secretary, Laurence Smaje, 22 Hampden Hill, Beaconsfield HP9 1BP by 21st October