**THE BENSINGTON SOCIETY**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2018**

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**NOTE: This Report is also available in the Society’s folder in the Benson Library and also on the Society’s website.**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st 2018**

This is my first report as Chair of the Society’s Management Committee and it coincides with a change to the content of the Annual Report. Rather than have a report from each member of the Committee, I will attempt to cover it all using their reports to me. Hopefully this will save a tree or two’s worth of paper and some of your time. I am also conscious of following some distinguished and hard-working Chairmen and have tried to live up to their standards and the Committee’s faith in electing me as the Chairman for 2018.

This year has not seen the major changes of the last few years, when we converted to a Charity with a new Constitution, almost entirely based on the Draft Constitution provided to us by the Charity Commission. This mandated new definition of meetings, such as a General Meeting, an Extraordinary General Meeting and an Annual General Meeting, with rules about notices, voting and quorums, to ensure that nobody is disenfranchised on any required voting issue. However, we did review and update the Committee’s and its helpers’ rule book. This defines how we operate the Society. We also, thanks to George Verdon, modernised and updated the website and copies of both the Constitution and the Rule Book can be found on the new site, along with up-to-date information on all the activities of the Society.

As a Committee we are aware of the need to ensure we continue to live up to our Aims and so we are discussing and trialling some changes to the Friday meetings to bring in more discussion on local issues, as brought to our attention by members. I would ask for your patience, as the first change we make will not necessarily be the last, as we try to adapt the meetings to meet members’ wishes. The initial trial we had at the October meeting, to discuss the School extension, resulted in about 22 of the approximately 85 who attended the evening, having a lively discussion, with everyone having their say, ensuring that participants were well informed of the varying views on the subject. The School extension has proved to be a controversial issue with strong views expressed on both sides. Your committee did extensive due diligence on the subject and decided unanimously that because of the diverse opinions we would not back either ‘side’ but instead would back the views of the professionals in the middle of all the discussions, namely the School Head and its Governors. It is they who have to care for the children and manage their education.

Financially the Society is in good order. As with all societies, the management of finance plays an important part in ensuring we have the funds to meet our required expenditure and to ensure we have a bright future. So please read the Treasurer’s report and the financial statement.

The evening meetings have been well attended and we have gained 22 members over the year. Mike Dyde retired as Membership Secretary early in the year and John Tchighianoff has taken over. Mike has done a great job for many years and the Committee will miss his calm counsel. We also lost members due to them moving, or sadly, ill health or death. One notable member who died was Robin Swain, who was a founding member and a past Chairman and President – a wonderful man and a sad loss to all who knew him.

The 2019 Membership Renewal form was sent out separately in December. Membership fees for 2019 are due in January and this year a full review of our membership list is being carried out, therefore all members are asked to complete their details in full on the form. At the AGM on the 25th January, the Hall will be open for membership renewals from 6:30 pm. However, it would be helpful if members would complete and return their forms with payment before the AGM, as this will help avoid long queues on that evening.

At the time of writing, our membership stands at 169 and is drawn from Benson, Crowmarsh, Dorchester, Ewelme, Wallingford and our surrounding villages

The ever-popular suppers continue to be much appreciated, as is the work of all the helpers who, under the management of Sue Fowler and with Yvonne Griffiths and Barbara Goss supervising salad production, continue to produce around 90 meals for each meeting, including catering for vegetarian and gluten free diets. However, to ensure that the Friday evenings break even, the Committee is proposing to increase the cost of a supper to £5 per head, which I am sure we will all still see as superb value. This will take place as of the February meeting. We are always in need of volunteer salad makers to spread the load, so if you can help please contact Sue or Yvonne at the next meeting. All ingredient costs are met by the Society. Our thanks also go to Tanya and her crew, without whom we would need a washing-up rota as well!

The Bar has again flourished, with Martin and often Margaret Daniell providing a wide range of drinks, at very reasonable prices. Martin must spend hours trawling for the bargains that we all benefit from. Sadly, Martin is standing down as Bar Manager after almost 7 years of great service. However, I am pleased to announce that Sue and David Cooper have offered to take over the role, with Martin standing by as cover.

The third part of our Friday evening meetings is our speakers. 2018 saw a wide-ranging series of talks, from our own Catherine Murray’s talk on ‘Benson’s Old Buildings’, through ‘Scandal in High Society Oxfordshire’ to ‘Oman, land of eagles’. All were well received. John Murphy took over from me as Talk Secretary in April, as I was given the role of Chairman. John has already organised the talks as far as April 2020 but I am sure would still welcome any suggestions from members. The recent survey we carried out indicated we were meeting members’ desires for the breadth of subjects, with over 75% asking for a wide range of subjects.

Outings are still well supported. Changes made when Denis DeBeger stood down, who had superbly organised them on his own, in moving to a team management profile, led by Joan Weedon, is working very well and has continued to provide interesting places to visit and at a very low cost. The new booking system is also working well. In addition to the trip venue we occasionally get a surprise as Joan points out -

*“The surprise at the end of the tour of Berkeley Castle was the Exhibition of some of the dresses from Strictly Come Dancing! Beautifully made but if only the waists were slightly bigger!!*

Our thanks go to Joan and her Committee for managing our outings so well.

The scrutiny of planning applications and our involvement in ensuring we meet our Aims takes a great deal of time and effort and I would like to formally thank our President, Martyn Spence, for doing such a superb job. He was deeply involved in helping produce the Neighbourhood Plan which, as we all know, is now legally approved, having received overwhelming support at the recent Referendum.

The History Group, ably chaired by Janet Burtt, continues to make its major contribution to researching the history of the village and its past inhabitants. One of the highlights of the year was the installation of the Dines Blue Plaque a Benson first. The group also contributed substantially to the end of WWI exhibition that took place in the Parish Hall on November 3rd, with displays of their research on life after the War. Please go on to their website [www.bensingtonhistory.org](http://www.bensingtonhistory.org) to read their full report on the year’s activities. The Society’s books on the history of the Village are selling steadily and are available from Derry’s Den or the Society.

I would also like to thank our Secretary and Vice Chairman, Paul Booker, for the great job he has done in diligently ordering the Society’s correspondence and day to day activities and managing our Committee meetings, including keeping me well advised. Regrettably, Paul is retiring at the end of the year and will be sorely missed. However, John Murphy has volunteered to be nominated for the role for 2019. The knowledge he has gained from being a respected and active member of the Committee should stand him in good stead. This leaves us with a potential vacancy for Talks Secretary. Having done the job myself, I can say that it is an extremely interesting role. The talks for 2019 and early 2020 are already booked and so the hand-over period will be easy. We should also think of managing the talks by a group – like Outings. So, volunteer(s) please.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members for their support during another successful year. This society is, and always will be, about its members and the environment we all live in, not looking backward but forward, to ensure it is improved and enhanced, while at the same time enjoying some convivial socialising.

The Committee wish you all a happy, healthy and successful 2019.

David McGill, Chairman, The Bensington Society

**DRAFT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DEC 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BREAKDOWN OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD 1 JAN 2017 - 31 DEC 2018** | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Previous Period** | | | | **Current Period** | | | |
| **Item** | **Income** | **Expenditure** | **Balance** | **Item** | **Income** | **Expenditure** | **Balance** |
| **Investment** | **£ 298.01** |  |  | **Investment** | **£ 298.01** |  |  |
| **Donations** | **£ 20.00** | **£ 434.00** |  | **Donations** |  | **£ 343.00** |  |
| **Office** |  | **£ 287.31** |  | **Office** |  | **£ 313.37** |  |
| **Raffle** | **£ 243.00** | **£ 121.45** |  | **Xmas Raffle** | **£ 209.00** | **£ 65.55** |  |
| **Float** |  |  |  | **Access Software** |  | **£ 219.98** |  |
| **Misc** |  |  |  | **Misc** |  | **£ 240.50** |  |
| **HMRC** |  |  |  | **HMRC** | **£ 100.80** | **£** |  |
| **Book Depreciation** | **-** | **£ 1,313.53** |  | **Book Depreciation** |  | **£ 1,313.53** |  |
| **Grant** | **£ 510.00** |  |  | **Grant** |  | **£ 500.00** |  |
| **Gifts** |  | **£ 143.96** |  | **Gifts** |  | **£ 209.26** |  |
| **Memberships** |  | **£ 110.00** |  | **Memberships** |  | **£ 110.00** |  |
| **Notice Board** |  | **£ 192.00** |  | **Notice Board** |  |  |  |
| **Cutlery** |  | **£ 137.04** |  | **Cutlery** |  |  |  |
| **Website** |  | **£ 111.75** |  | **Website** |  |  |  |
| **Insurance** |  | **£ 265.34** |  | **Insurance** |  | **£ 270.35** |  |
| **Book Loss** |  |  |  | **Book Loss** |  |  |  |
| **Total General** | **£ 1,071.01** | **£ 3,116.38** | **-£ 2,045.37** | **Total General** | **£ 607.81** | **£ 3,585.54** | **-£ 2,977.73** |
| **Food** | **£ 2,897.94** | **£ 1,750.00** | **£ 1,147.94** | **Food** | **£ 2,694.24** | **£ 1,750.00** | **£ 944.24** |
| **Bar** | **£ 1,129.33** | **£ 511.02** | **£ 618.31** | **Bar** | **£ 481.31** | **£ 200.00** | **£ 281.31** |
| **Hall** |  | **£ 981.17** | **-£ 981.17** | **Hall** |  | **£ 966.63** | **-£ 966.63** |
| **Kitchen Help** |  | **£ 480.00** | **-£ 480.00** | **Kitchen Help** |  | **£ 460.00** | **-£ 460.00** |
| **Speakers** | **£ 150.00** | **£ 656.00** | **-£ 506.00** | **Speakers** |  | **£ 685.00** | **-£ 685.00** |
| **Subscriptions** | **£ 1,692.00** | **£ 10.00** | **£ 1,682.00** | **Subscriptions** | **£ 1,460.00** |  | **£ 1,460.00** |
| **Raffle** | **£ 363.00** | **£ 120.00** | **£ 243.00** | **Monthly Raffle** | **£ 452.00** | **£ 140.00** | **£ 312.00** |
| **Visitors** | **£ 144.00** | **-** | **£ 144.00** | **Visitors** | **£ 108.00** |  | **£ 108.00** |
| **Books Write Off** |  | **£ 486.64** | **-£ 486.64** | **Books Write Off** |  | **£ 107.10** | **-£ 107.10** |
|  |  |  |  | **Books Depreciation** |  |  |  |
| **Books** | **£ 293.75** | **£ 250.87** | **£ 42.88** | **Books** | **£ 378.75** | **£ 323.93** | **£ 54.82** |
| **Outings** | **£ 4,090.00** | **£ 4,007.30** | **£ 82.70** | **Outings** | **£ 3,919.00** | **£ 3,810.65** | **£ 108.35** |
| **History** | **£ 110.00** | **£ 272.66** | **-£ 162.66** | **History** | **£ 35.00** | **£ 384.08** | **-£ 349.08** |
| **Totals Funds** | **£ 10,870.02** | **£ 9,525.66** |  | **Totals Funds** | **£ 9,528.30** | **£ 8,827.39** |  |
| **Grand Total** | **£ 11,941.03** | **£ 12,642.04** |  | **Grand Total** | **£ 10,136.11** | **£ 12,412.93** |  |
|  | **Balance** | **-£ 701.01** | **-£ 701.01** |  | **Balance** | **-£ 2,276.82** | **-£ 2,276.82** |

**DRAFT BALANCE SHEET AS AT THE 31st DECEMBER 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Balance Sheet Bensington Society as at 31 Dec 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Previous Period Figures** | | | |  | **Current Period Figures** | | |
| **Totals** | **Sub-Totals** | | **Totals** |  | **Totals** | **Sub-Totals** | **Totals** |
|  |  | |  | **ASSETS** |  |  |  |
|  |  | | **£ 495.92** | **Cash in Hand** | **£ 399.95** |  |  |
|  |  | | **£7,124.53** | **Cash in Bank** | **£6,688.24** |  |  |
|  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | |  | **R&C** |  |  |  |
|  | **£7,620.45** | | **Total Cash** | | | **£ 7,088.19** |  |
|  | **£ -** | | **Deposit Accounts** | | |  |  |
|  | **£ -** | | **Sundry Creditors** | | | **£ -** |  |
|  | **£ -** | | **Sundry Debtors** | | | **£ -** |  |
|  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **£ 7,620.45** | | **Total Liquid Assest** | | | **£ 7,088.19** |  |
|  |  | | **STOCKS** | | |  |  |
|  |  | | **£ 852.18** | **Book 1** | **£ 581.68** |  |  |
|  |  | | **£1,246.00** | **Book 2** | **£ 760.06** |  |  |
|  |  | | **£2,993.54** | **Book 3** | **£2,048.60** |  |  |
|  |  | | **£ 162.42** | **Book 4** | **£ 119.24** |  |  |
|  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | | **£ -** |  |  |  |  |
|  | **£ 5,254.14** | | **Total Stocks** | | | **£ 3,509.58** |  |
|  | **£ 12,874.59** | | **Total Current Assets** | | | **£10,597.77** |  |
|  |  | | **LIABILITES** | | |  |  |
|  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | |  |  | **£ -** |  |  |
|  | **£ -** | | **Total Liabilities** | | | **£ -** |  |
| **£ 12,874.59** | **Net Working Capital(Current Assets minus Liabilities** | | | | | | **£ 10,597.77** |
|  | **FIXED ASSETS** | | | | | |  |
|  | **£ 24,834.53** | **Investments at Cost** | | | | **£ 24,834.53** |  |
|  |  |  | | **Market Value** |  |  |  |
|  | **£ -** | **Capital Property** | | | | **£ -** |  |
| **£ 24,834.53** | **£ -** |  | | **Total Fixed Assets** |  | **£ -** | **£ 24,834.53** |
|  |  | **GENERAL** | | **PURPOSES** | **FUND** |  |  |
|  | **£38,410.13** | **Balance as per Last Balance Sheet** | | | | **£37,709.12** |  |
|  | **.** | **Add Excess of Income** | | | |  |  |
|  | **£ 701.01** | **Subtract Excess of Income** | | | | **-£ 2,276.82** |  |
| **£ 37,709.12** |  | **Accumulated General Purposes Fund** | | | |  | **£ 35,432.30** |
| **being Net Working Capital and Total Fixed Assets** | | | | | | | |

**TREASURER’S FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

2018 was another year where we have shown a small loss. However, our accumulated funds of £35,432 mean that we are still in a healthy financial position. Nevertheless, it means that we have to look at increasing some of our prices in order that we stay that way.

Our overall Accumulated General Fund decreased by £2,276.82 but the cash in the bank and to hand of £7,088.19 is sufficient to meet our day to day needs. 58% of the shortfall was the Books stock’s depreciation of £1313.53. Apart from Total Cash, our Books are our only Current Asset. Stocks (at written down value) are valued at £3,509.58. Our policy is to write down their value by 20% p.a of the original cost price.

The main reasons for the drop in funds are:-

* A couple of one-off items - our donation of £500 towards the process of installing the Dines Blue Plaque and expenditure on new accounting and membership control software
* The slight drop in membership with its concomitant drop in food and bar takings
* The fact that we have not yet been able to claim about £210 of Gift aid due to temporary problems in accessing our account. This will be accounted for in our 2019 year.

Our regular activities of outings, providing supper for the Friday meetings and the bar all made a slight profit.

Out total Current Assets stand at £10,557.77 and we have no Debtors or Creditors.

Our investment money is held with the Coventry Building Society, in a low risk deposit fund. At the end of 2018 it stood at £23,834.53. The Committee plan to review their investment policy in 2019 and will bring their recommendation to the 2019 AGM.

Finally, the increase in the Supper fee is designed to make the Friday evening meetings self-funding but, depending on our legislature’s decision on Brexit, we may have to increase our bar prices to ensure that our meetings remain so.

Tony Holder, Treasurer.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Bensington Society (the Society) for the year ended 31st December 2018.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Society you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (‘the Act’).

I report in respect of my examination of the Society’s accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### Independent examiner’s statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

* accounting records were not kept in respect of the Society as required by section 130 of the Act;

or

* the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Heather Emerson

Note:- A signed copy of this report is available on request.

Our grateful thanks go to Heather Emerson for her time and expertise in examining our accounts. We are very lucky to have people like Heather as a member.

**GOVERNANCE**

The Society is governed by its Constitution and the Trustees also by the Rule Book, which is reviewed annually. Both of these documents are available on the Society’s Website and in the Society’s folder in the Benson Public Library.

The Constitution is very largely the general one suggested to the Society by HMRC, when we registered with them as a Small Charity, but adapted for our specific Society. We are not registered with the Charity Commission, only with HMRC for Gift Aid purposes.

**AIMS FOR 2019**

Our aims for 2019 are:

* To build and maintain a strong link to the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Team.
* To continue the trial of ways to involve interested members in discussions on local issues.
* To maintain a wide range of interesting subjects for the talks to the Friday evening meetings and interesting places to visit for our Outings.
* To review the investment policy with the aim of putting recommendations to the AGM for 2019
* To review and update the Rule Book.
* To evaluate and respond to requests for a financial donation from local causes whose aims align with the Aims of the Society.

The above are not in any priority order.