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**ANNUAL REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020**

**CONTENTS:**

1. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REVIEW**
2. **DRAFT BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2020**
3. **DRAFT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR 2020**
4. **TREASURER’S FINANCIAL STATEMENT**
5. **INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF ACCOUNTS**
6. **GOVERNANCE**
7. **AIMS FOR 2021**

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

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Well, where do I start? What a year! The only good thing I can think of is at least the word BREXIT will be heard less – it will still be around but, hopefully, it will not dominate the headlines and will gradually fade away as we adjust to our new situation.

Talking of new situations but much closer to home, there is the activity of our Society in 2021 but more on that later.

2020 started off well enough – we even managed to get in our AGM but all the planning that the Committee had done (mainly Fenella for Talks and Joan and her committee for outings), suddenly ‘went out of the window’.

So, COVID-19 ENTERTAINMENT COMMUNICATION was born in an attempt to help with the large amount of time we all had due to LOCKDOWN – another word I think we will all be glad to see the back of. At the time of writing, we will have sent out 19 with the next due in a few weeks’ time. Several members have contributed to them and your Committee’s thanks go to all who have written in or verbally thanked us for sending them out.

Looking forward, as you already know for those that have paid their 2020 subscription, no subscription is due for 2021, as your Committee decided that the 2020 subscription would cover both years. For all others they will need to pay for 2021.

We welcomed Frank Farquharson to the Committee to take over the Planning brief from Martyn and Frank has put out all relevant information, either within one of the 19 COVID COMMS or as a separate Email.

Sad to say we will be losing two important member of the Committee at the AGM, when our Secretary John Murphy will be standing down, after several years of valued service along with Sue Fowler our Catering Member for the last year. Our Outings Co-ordinator, Joan Weedon, will also be standing down from that position but has agreed to be nominated for the 2021 Committee as a Member without portfolio. If anyone would like to consider taking on either of the roles, please get in touch with me and I can explain the duties. Given current restrictions on movement, it is the Secretary’s role which is needed most.

As you would expect, there are no reports on Catering, Bar or Outings this year, as almost nothing happened. However, I am delighted to say that after much work Fenella has managed to arrange Talks for the first 5 months on ZOOM and by the time you read this, we will have trialled the first one on 29th January.

Our only sub-committee, The History Group (HG), has not been able to meet up since February 2020 but enquiries are still being answered as received via the website ([www.bensingtonhistory.org](about:blank)). Help is still also being given to enquirers to the FOBL Family History Clinic and to the RAF Benson Heritage Centre.

Temporary storage has been found for the village models which were earlier acquired for the village by Peter Clarke and the HG is always happy to receive information, photos etc., in a digital format.  Although the HG is continuing to digitise much of its records, the issue of storage for records and artefacts is ongoing and the HG states that it is grateful to the Society for its support in the continuing search for storage space.

As required, the Committee did review our investment policies and, after looking at our options, decided to follow the Treasurer’s recommendation of staying with the Coventry Building Society.

We also reviewed our Rule Book to make sure no changes were required. We will do this every year.

One of the really good things to come out of the present troubles, and there weren’t many, is the coming together of our village and local communities to help those in need of physical and/or mental help – just a phone call could make a wonderful difference. We were glad therefore to aid the setting up of the Benson Help Hub by a donation from the Society of £1000. Let us hope that this new community spirit endures.

The Christmas Quiz, sponsored by the Society, and put together by the tireless Fenella and helpers, was another effort to bring people together and for all to learn more about our wonderful Village.

Our accounts for 2020 have been Examined and, I’m pleased to say, have passed with no reservations. For your information, the Independent Examiner’s report, along with the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement, both of which were adopted by your Committee at their meeting on the 19th January 2021, are included in this Annual Report.

The AGM this year will obviously have to take a different format and so your Committee has decided to run it by Email and Post. We are lucky that George Verdon (VP) has already conducted and/or participated in a couple of AGMs that have been successfully done this way and so he will be co-ordinating ours, which will take place on Friday 26th February. Please participate as we need at least 60 people to do so to be quorate.

Looking forward, your Committee believes it is unlikely that we shall recommence our Friday evening get-togethers until September, by which time we should all have been vaccinated and we should be experiencing our new ‘normal’. Consequently, we have planned accordingly BUT should we be able to meet before, then we will do so. However, it is not just up to us - the Hall is still not opening and does not know its forward plans.

As always, your Committee welcomes any suggestions to improve on the enjoyment of our Society, particularly in the current environment. So don’t hold back, it’s your Society.

Finally, and by no means the least of our notes, we have been notified of and are sad to record the deaths of 5 of our members, Sylvia Baker, Richard Boorne, Mick Doney, Margaret Edmondson and Joan Gordon. They will be greatly missed by their families and friends and by our Society that sends our condolences to their families. In different ways, they all made positive contributions to our community.

Stay safe,

DAMcGill

David McGill

Chairman

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Balance Sheet Bensington Society as at 31 Dec 2020 | | | | | | |
| Previous Period Figures | | |  | Current Period Figures | | |
| Totals | Sub-Totals | Totals |  | Totals | Sub-Totals | Totals |
|  |  |  | ASSETS |  |  |  |
|  |  | £432.14 | Cash in Hand | £679.59 |  |  |
|  |  | £7,134.56 | Cash in Bank | £6,389.22 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | R&C |  |  |  |
|  | £7,566.70 | Total Cash | | | £7,068.81 |  |
|  |  | Deposit Accounts | | |  |  |
|  |  |  | | |  |  |
|  | £180.00 | Sundry Creditors | | |  |  |
|  | - | Sundry Debtors | | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | £7,386.70 | Total Liquid Assest | | | £7,068.81 |  |
|  |  | STOCKS | | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | £427.06 | Book 1 | £326.43 |  |  |
|  |  | £871.49 | Book 2 | £656.64 |  |  |
|  |  | £1,757.19 | Book 3 | £1,379.95 |  |  |
|  |  | £88.20 | Book 4 | £63.25 |  |  |
|  |  |  | Bar | £188.00 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | £3,143.94 | Total Stocks | | | £2,614.27 |  |
|  | £10,530.64 | Total Current Assets | | | £9,683.08 |  |
|  |  | LIABILITES | | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | - |  |  |
|  |  | Total Liabilities | | | - |  |
| £10,530.64 | Net Working Capital(Current Assets minus Liabilities | | | | | £9,683.08 |
|  | FIXED ASSETS | | | | |  |
|  | £24,834.53 | Investments at Cost | | | £24,844.53 |  |
|  |  |  | Market Value |  |  |  |
|  |  | Capital Property | | |  |  |
| £24,834.53 |  |  | Total Fixed Assets |  | - | £24,844.53 |
|  |  |  | GENERAL PURPOSES FUND | |  |  |
|  | £35,432.30 | Balance as per Last Balance Sheet | | | £35,365.17 |  |
|  | . | Add Excess of Income | | |  |  |
|  | £67.13 | Subtract Excess of Income | | | £837.56 |  |
| £35,365.17 |  | Accumulated General Purposes Fund | | |  | £34,527.61 |
| being Net Working Capital and Total Fixed Assets | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Previous Period** | | | | **Current Period** | | | |
| **Item** | **£ Income** | **£ Expenditure** | **£ Balance** | **Item** | **£ Income** | **£ Expenditure** | **£ Balance** |
| Coventry BS | 409.77 | - | +409.77 | Coventry BS | 419.77 | - | + 419.77 |
| Office |  | 382.99 | - 382.99 | Office |  | 107.20 | - 107.20 |
| IT Subs |  | 110.00 | - 110.00 |  |  |  |  |
| Misc |  | 13.00 | - 13.00 | Misc |  |  |  |
| HMRC | 374.55 | - | + 374.55 | HMRC | 265.00 |  | + 265.00 |
| Bk Depreciation |  | 785.98 | - 785.98 | Bk Depreciation |  | 606.57 | - 606.57 |
| Advance M'ships |  | 180.00 | - 180.00 | Coventry BS |  |  |  |
| Gifts |  | 99.98 | - 99.98 | Compensation | 75.00 |  | + 75.00 |
| 2018 Xmas Party |  |  | - | Christmas Quiz |  | 165.00 | - 165.00 |
| Notice Board |  | 66.00 | - 66.00 | Cupboard |  | 159.99 | - 159.99 |
| Website |  | - | - |  |  |  |  |
| Wreath |  | 50.00 | - 50.00 | Wreath |  | 100.00 | - 100.00 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Insurance |  | 270.35 | -£ 270.35 | Insurance |  | 270.35 | - 270.35 |
| **Total General** | **£784.32** | **£ 1,958.30** | **-£ 1,173.98** | **Total General** | **£759.77** | **£ 1,409.11** | **-£ 649.34** |
| Food | 3,362.38 | 2,000.00 | + 1,362.38 | Food | 787.43 | 500.00 | + 287.43 |
| Bar | 870.47 | 271.39 | + 599.08 | Bar | 401.50 | 76.15 | + 325.35 |
|  |  |  |  | Stock revaluation | 188.00 |  | + 188.00 |
| Hall/Licence |  | 1,214.33 | - 1,214.33 | Hall |  | 321.40 | - 321.40 |
| Kitchen Help |  | 480.00 | - 480.00 | Kitchen Help |  | 270.00 | - 270.00 |
| Speakers | 90.00 | 782.60 | - 692.60 | Speakers |  | 130.00 | - 130.00 |
| Membership fees | 1,705.00 | - | + 1,705.00 | Membership fees | 1,350.00 |  | +1,350.00 |
| Subscriptions |  | - |  | Subscriptions |  | 123.00 | - 123.00 |
| Monthly Raffle | 421.00 | 120.00 | + 301.00 | Monthly Raffle | 122.50 | 40.00 | + 82.50 |
| Xmas Raffle | 86.00 | 95.52 | - 9.52 | Xmas Raffle |  |  | - |
| Visitors | 88.00 | - | + 88.00 | Visitors | 8.00 |  | + 8.00 |
| Books Gain/woff | 619.76 | - | + 619.76 | Books Gain/woff |  | 57.32 | - 57.32 |
| Book Sales | 307.25 | 199.42 | + 107.83 | Book Sales | 353.75 | 53.78 | + 299.97 |
| Donations | 10.00 | 914.00 | - 904.00 | Donations |  | 1,000.00 | -,1000.00 |
| Outings | 3,095.00 | 3,308.75 | - 213.75 | Outings |  | 542.50 | - 542.50 |
| History |  | 162.00 | - 162.00 | History |  | 285.25 | - 285.25 |
| **Totals Funds** | **£ 10,654.86** | **£ 9,548.01** | **£ 1,106.85** | **Totals Funds** | **£ 3,211.18** | **£ 3,399.40** |  |
| **Grand Total** | **£ 11,439.18** | **£ 11,506.31** |  | **Grand Total** | **£ 3,970.95** | **£ 4,808.51** |  |
|  | **Balance** | **-£ 67.13** |  |  | **Balance** | **-£ 837.56** | **-£ 837.56** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**TREASURER’S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020**

The Balance Sheet and Breakdown of Income and Expenditure for 2020, given above, show the following:

**Overall Financial Situation**. This year we have incurred a deficit of £838 which is much larger than last year’s deficit of £67 largely for two reasons. Firstly because we still had various fixed costs to pay during the year but we received Bar and Meals profits for only two Meetings. And secondly our advance payment of £542.50 to Bristol Aerospace (see Outings below). Our cash assets amount to £7,069 which is a reduction of £498 on last year. When combined with our investments our total fixed assets are £34,528, including the value of book and bar stocks.

**Books**. Book sales this year were £354, an increase of £47 on last year. Sales were helped by sales of the book Our Stream, about the history of the brook that runs from Ewelme to Benson, copies of which were very generously donated by the author, David Solomon, for sale by the Society. The stock value of all books at the end of the year was £2,426 having been devalued by an annual 20% in accordance with the Committee’s direction.

**Donations**. The Society made donations of £1,000 to the Benson Help Hub to help its work in the wider local community (preparation and delivery of meals and other services) during the initial Coronavirus lockdown; and of £100 to the British Legion poppy appeal. (Total donations £914 in 2019).

**Monthly Meetings**: It is the Committee’s view that the monthly meetings should normally be self-financing. However, the two meetings in 2020 received income of £1,197 for meals, bar and visitors against which we incurred costs for food, bar, speakers and hall hire and staff of £1,297, leaving us with a net loss of £100.

***Membership***. The annual membership fee has remained at £10 for many years, so at last year’s AGM it was agreed to increase the fee to £15 for 2020. Subsequently the Committee decided to reduce this to £13 but in view of the forced cancellation of our monthly meetings this year the Committee have decided to delay this increase until 2022 and to apply to 2021 the fees paid for 2020. Membership fees amounted to £1,350 (£1,365 in 2019). In addition we received £265 in Gift Aid rebate on these membership fees.

Investments. Currently our investment is with the Coventry Building Society which last year brought in £409 of interest. Despite the very low interest rate that the Coventry have announced for the next year (in common with most other financial institutions) the Committee decided to leave our investment with the Coventry for one more year as the investment market is currently experiencing a period of considerable volatility.

**Outings.** No outings were possible in 2020. The cost of £542.50 for Outings in the Breakdown of Income and Expenditure refers to the payment made to Bristol Aerospace for the planned visit which we hope will be possible in 2021.

Given the above and allowing for the constraints that 2020 has placed upon us, I believe The Society remains in a sound financial position.

Richard Peters, Treasurer Date signed: 31.12.2020

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER’S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE BENSINGTON SOCIETY**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2020**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Bensington Society (the Society) for the year ended 31st December 2020.

### 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:

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

2. 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.

Name: Heather Emerson,

Relevant Professional Qualification: ACA (retired from practising)

Address: 18 Horseshoes Lane, Benson

Date: 3 January 2021

**GOVERNANCE**

Our 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 our Society’s Website and in its folder in the Benson Public Library.

The Constitution is very largely the general one suggested to our 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 2021**

* To plan to commence our Friday evening meetings as soon as it is safe and possible to do so
* To try to attract younger people to our Society
* To involve more of the membership in the running of our Society
* To maintain our link to the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Team.
* To have a series of talks arranged on ZOOM until we can start meeting again.
* To arrange a programme of outings for when they can safely start.
* To review the investment policy with the aim of securely improving our return.
* 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 our Society.

Except for the first one, the above are not in any priority order