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**BENSON BULLETIN REPORT – APR 2023**

In the last issue I wished everyone a “happy Springtime” and although the weather, at the time of writing, is still stuck in winter the spring signs are there; snowdrops are coming to an end, crocuses and daffodils are out and even the early tulips are showing green. Let’s hope the weather takes notice!

The AGM went smoothly on the 24th February, with the membership voting positively throughout the Agenda with no abstentions or dissent. The talk that followed on – ‘Baked Alaska or Mexican Chilly’ – on climate change, given by Nick Cook, was really well received. At the end many members said that at last they now understood, for the first time, how it was happening. A major help with the understanding was Nick’s outstanding graphics which left you in no doubt that we need to take effective action NOW!

The membership are now represented by a restructured Management Committee, led by a new Chairman, Martyn Spence. If the name sound familiar it should do. Martyn was our immediate past President and has, over many years, filled most of the Officer roles on the Committee. Ann Doré is going to understudy and, we hope, take over the role of Secretary from our temporary Secretary George Verdon (our President). Pete Eldridge is taking on the role of Security Services Manager, a new role that supervises our policies and actions with regard to GDPR, Cyber Security, Fire Safety and First Aid. Following the election of the Management Committee the membership gave a strong round of applause to thank all the other members who help the Committee in many ways to ensure that our Society’s aims are met and our Friday evenings continue to be such a success.

For those of us who are lucky to receive their copy of the Benson Bulletin before the 31st of March - the date of our next Friday evening meeting – our next speaker will be Peter Adamson who will be talking about our “Local landmark in time, the World of the Wittenham Clumps”. This will tell the stories of people and places within view of these two small hills – stories that take us from the Antarctic to the Western Front, from the rise of the Red Kite to the future of the Chiltern beech woods.

The talk at our April the 28th meeting is entitled “Beer, Sausages and Marmalade” and will be given by Liz Woolley, a speaker well-known and much respected by the Society. Liz is a freelance local history writer, speaker and broadcaster and is Treasurer and Membership Secretary to the OLHS.

Now to planning issues. The society mailed all members asking them to take the time to comment on the latest applications for even more houses to the north and west of the Village. I am pleased to say that, in round figures, SODC received over 275 comments on the Elivia application and over 200 comments on the Croudace application which has now been refused.

An early PLUG! On the 24th June The Bensington Society History Group is planning to hold an Open Day at the Parish Hall, which we hope will provide parishioners old and new with an insight into Benson’s past. The event will include displays of research topics, rolling slide shows, artefacts and reference documents. As you are no doubt aware, Benson is an historic village of note and its history dates back to Saxon times. Subjects will include local families, buildings, trades, etc. You can see some examples of this work on the Group’s websites at:-

[www.bensingtonhistory.org](http://www.bensingtonhistory.org/) and [www.benson-village.co.uk](http://www.benson-village.co.uk/)

Our History Group is now low on members and would welcome anybody who enjoys delving into the past to preserve our local history to join us. Assistance with the Open Day event would also be very much appreciated. For further details please contact the Secretary (Sue Brown) on 01491 837885 or via [bensingtonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:bensingtonhistory@gmail.com)

Finally, don’t forget we have the local council elections on the 4th May. With regard to our Parish Council, let’s hope this time we have sufficient people standing to actually have an election rather than, like many previous times, just reappoint those of the current Parish Council who are willing to stand. No matter how dedicated the current team is, new blood always brings fresh ideas.

David McGill