



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

- 1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REVIEW AND COMMITTEE REPORT**
- 2. TREASURER'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT**
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- 5. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

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

#### **AIMS**

The aims of the Bensington Society are:

- To encourage a spirit of community.
- To preserve, protect, develop and improve features of historic or public interest.
- To promote, support and publish research into the history of Benson and its satellite villages.
- To stimulate public interest in matters of local concern, promoting high standards of planning and architecture, and protecting and enhancing Benson's physical character and rural environment.
- To work with other groups, organisations and individuals to improve facilities offered to residents for recreation and leisure activities.

## 1. Chairman's Annual Review

Some thirteen months ago, because there was no one prepared to volunteer as Chairman, I was asked to take on the task, having been Chairman for some years in the past. I agreed with some trepidation. In the event I have been supported by an outstanding committee and the task proved much easier than expected. In particular, John Tchighianoff, Membership Secretary, agreed to remain for a final year to help me out, Fenella Galpin produced an outstanding list of speakers, and Ken Blake and Ann Wright who have settled into their roles as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. I am delighted that John Tchighianoff's role as Membership Secretary will now be filled by David Rhys-Davies. I have been an exceptionally lucky Chairman!

A highlight of the year was the recognition of Freydis Sharland's life and work in the awarding of an Oxfordshire Blue Plaque, unveiled at a ceremony at the family home in Brook Street on 18 May. Freydis was a key figure and previous President of the Bensington Society, and it was fitting that we sponsored and hosted a reception in the Canons' Room at St Helen's Church following the ceremony.

Membership of the Society has remained high and was 174 at the end of 2024, some memberships lapsed, others have taken their place. We note with sadness the deaths in 2024 of long-standing members of the Society – Rodney Davis, Jocelyn Dalton and Clive Bosley.

The financial situation is very strong and the Treasurer's report following this reflects the situation.

Brief reports on different areas of the Society's life follow this review, including the report of the History Group. Again, it is in a strong position and one in which we can all take pride.

Nevertheless, I am concerned about two aspects of our current activities.

- The first is the tendency to become merely a supper club, relying on a good speaker followed by a good meal. When I was formerly Chairman, the Society had been much more concerned with village matters. Since then, Benson has doubled in size without any specific involvement from the Society.
- Secondly, a feature of our Summer activities was a series of external visits. It is to be regretted that no one was prepared to volunteer to arrange them, but I am encouraged that this is currently under consideration again.

Peter Clarke

Chairman

## Reports from the Committee.

**History Group Report.** History Group, which is a sub-group of the Society, has been busy throughout the year with projects and work in the archive store. Thanks to the Parish Council, just over a year ago, a home was found in the new community hall to store village archives and progress has been made in cataloguing a large number of items with scanning where possible. Work is ongoing to identify and sort through a sizable amount of material. History Group members are continuing to compile a Buildings

Database and research subjects such as farming in the 1700/1800s, as well as assisting at the Library's Family History Clinic and at the RAF Benson Heritage Centre. The Heritage Open Day at St Helen's Church in September was an opportunity to display some of the archive material and the maps, models and photographs of old Benson attracted considerable interest. Enquiries are regularly received via the website [www.bensingtonhistory.org](http://www.bensingtonhistory.org) where more information and contact details are available.

**Friday meetings.** Over the year our membership has grown because we have interesting, informative and entertaining speakers but also because we all appreciate the chance to eat and drink together with friends in a convivial atmosphere. We are grateful to Barbara Verdon for running the raffle, the members who have contributed salads, Benson Butchers for providing ham, David and Liz McGill for organising and reimbursing the salad-givers, David McGill for bringing in, amongst other things, bread and cheese, Sue Cooper and her husband for running the bar, the washing up team and last but not least Anna Pieron for bringing it all together. Long may this continue in 2025! Despite rising costs for both food and drinks, the Friday evenings have run at a small surplus for the year and the Committee has agreed not to increase the current £5 per head for supper.

**Planning issues.** Members are encouraged to take part in planning and other consultations that affect the village, such as the changes in bus routes and applications for further developments. Updates on the repair of the weir and progress on the relief road have also been provided.

## **Governance**

The Bensington Society is governed by its Constitution, supplemented by the Rule Book; both of these documents are available on the Society's website and in Benson Public Library (in the Society's folder). The constitution is based on the Charity Commission model constitution for small charities and was adopted in 2015, with amendments in 2023 and 2024. As a small charity, the Bensington Society is registered with HMRC, enabling it to reclaim Gift Aid, but is not registered with the Charity Commission. The charity is managed by a Committee of Trustees, as per clause 10 of the constitution, who act as an Executive Committee, elected annually at the AGM and consisting of the Officers (Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary) and not less than three other members.

In meeting their responsibilities, the Committee have received reports from Pete Eldridge on his work in risk assessment and management and health and safety matters. A review of cyber security and GDPR will be undertaken in 2025.

## **2. Treasurer's Financial Statement.**

It can once again be reported that the Society's assets have grown during the year, by £1130 in 2024. The running surplus from our monthly meetings amounted to £386.89. This is based on takings from Bar and Supper sales but does not take account of any movements into or out of stock. Also excluded from these figures is the receipts from the monthly raffle, the surplus of which is usually donated to charity or local good causes. At the AGM in January 2024, it was agreed that these would be The Air Ambulance, The Millstream Centre and Maggie's Oxford.

Towards the end of the year a card machine was introduced for payments at the monthly meetings. Apart from some confusion at one meeting it seems to have been successful, taking payments for Suppers, the bar, visitors and membership.

There have been several non-recurrent items of expenditure for the Society during the year. Some significant donations were made such as the contribution towards the cost of the Blue Plaque for Freydis Sharland. Significant sums were expended on the replacement of the audio-visual equipment used for the monthly meetings.

Balance in the Lloyds Bank account on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2024 was £6102.82. This excludes membership fees of £168.00 paid direct for the 2025 year as at 29<sup>th</sup> December.

£26047.79 is held on deposit at the Coventry Building Society which saw interest received of £1416.31. Cash-in-hand totals £466.93 which represents floats for the monthly meetings plus odd cash of £36.93. Additional floats are held by the Bar (£60) and Raffle (£40).

### 3. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

Balance Sheet Bensington Society as at 31 Dec 2024						
Previous Period Figures				Current Period Figures		
Totals	Sub-Totals	Totals		Totals	Sub-Totals	Totals
			<b>ASSETS</b>			
		571.13	Cash in Hand	408.93		
		6935.16	Cash in Bank	6102.82		
7506.29			Total Cash	6511.75		
			Sundry Debtors	348.00		
-18.00			Sundry Creditors	-153.40		
7488.29			Total Liquid Assets	6706.35		
			<b>STOCKS</b>			
		141.44	Book 1	110.22		
		290.83	Book 2	223.70		
		622.88	Book 3	475.46		
		26.88	Book 4	20.36		
		313.05	Bar	575.99		
1395.08			Total Stocks	1405.73		
8883.37			Total Current Assets	8112.08		
			<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
0.00			Total Liabilities	0.00		
8883.37			Net Working Capital(Current Assets minus Liabilities)			8112.08
			<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
	24631.48		Investments at Cost	26047.79		
			Market Value			
			Capital Property			
24631.48			Total Fixed Assets			26047.79
33514.85			Total Nett Assets			34159.87
			<b>GENERAL PURPOSES FUND</b>			
	32288.10		Balance as per Last Balance Sheet	33514.85		
	1226.75		Add Excess of Income	645.02		
			Subtract Excess of Expenditure			
33514.85			Accumulated General Purposes Fund			34159.87
			being Net Working Capital and Total Fixed Assets			

Date 10/2/25

Signature of Treasurer

*[Signature]*

Date 10/2/25

Signature of Examiner

*[Signature]*

## 4. Income and Expenditure Statement for 2024

### BREAKDOWN OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD 1 JAN 2024 - 31 DEC 2024

Previous Period				Current Period			
Item	Income	Expenditure	Balance	Item	Income	Expenditure	Balance
Visitors	£ 125.00		£ 125.00	Visitors	320.00	0.00	320.00
Food	£ 2,845.00	£ 1,264.01	£ 1,580.99	Food	3090.00	1401.64	1688.36
Bar	£ 2,185.50	£ 994.45	£ 1,191.05	Bar	2316.91	1165.48	1151.43
Hall/Licence		£ 1,354.10	-£ 1,354.10	Hall/Licence		1265.00	-1265.00
Kitchen Help		£ 790.00	-£ 790.00	Kitchen Help		925.00	-925.00
Speakers		£ 505.40	-£ 505.40	Speakers		594.85	-594.85
Equipment				Equipment		858.81	-858.81
Monthly Raffle	£ 450.00	£ 120.00	£ 330.00	Monthly Raffle	586.55	140.00	446.55
Christmas Party		£ 114.21	-£ 114.21	Christmas Party		109.68	-109.68
Christmas Raffle	£ 190.00	£ 111.71	£ 78.29	Christmas Raffle	240.00	115.88	124.12
<b>Meetings</b>	<b>£ 5,795.50</b>	<b>£ 5,253.88</b>	<b>£ 541.62</b>	<b>Meetings</b>	<b>6553.46</b>	<b>6576.34</b>	<b>-22.88</b>
Memberships	£ 1,782.00		£ 1,782.00	Memberships	2052.00		2052.00
Gift Aid claim	£ 296.82		£ 296.82	Gift Aid claim	348.00		348.00
Outings				Outings		705.00	-705.00
Interest	£ 530.23	£ -	£ 530.23	Interest	1416.31		1416.31
Insurance		£ 160.65	-£ 160.65	Insurance		181.52	-181.52
Website		£ 208.43	-£ 208.43	Website		204.79	-204.79
Book sales	£ 288.50	£ 100.46	£ 188.04	Book sales	261.00	36.07	224.93
Book depreciation		£ 270.51	-£ 270.51	Book depreciation		216.22	-216.22
History		£ 591.11	-£ 591.11	History		258.10	-258.10
Miscellaneous		£ 182.50	-£ 182.50	Miscellaneous		42.40	-42.40
Secretarial		£ 99.78	-£ 99.78	Secretarial		144.35	-144.35
Gifts		£ 133.98	-£ 133.98	Gifts		38.96	-38.96
Subscriptions	£ -	£ 110.00	-£ 110.00	Subscriptions		50.00	-50.00
Donations	£ 20.00	£ 300.00	-£ 280.00	Blue Plaque		836.00	-836.00
Wreath		£ 75.00	-£ 75.00	Donations	304.00	975.00	-671.00
				Wreath		25.00	-25.00
<b>Other</b>	<b>£ 2,917.55</b>	<b>£ 2,232.42</b>	<b>£ 685.13</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>£ 4,381.31</b>	<b>£ 3,713.41</b>	<b>£ 667.90</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£ 8,713.05</b>	<b>£ 7,486.30</b>	<b>£ 1,226.75</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10934.77</b>	<b>10289.75</b>	<b>645.02</b>
	<b>Balance</b>	<b>£ 1,226.75</b>			<b>Balance</b>	<b>645.02</b>	

## 5. Independent Examiner's Report

### Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Bensington Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Bensington Society (the Society) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

#### 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.

Signed: 

Name: Heather Emerson

Relevant Professional Qualification: ACA (retired from practising)

Address: 18 Horseshoes Lane, Benson

Date: 10 February 2025