



2016/2017

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2016/2017

Executive Committee Report

Mike Hart, Chairman

The Executive Committee members of the Society this year have been: Mike Hart (Chairman), Bob Hine (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Ali Driver, Alan Furness (Hon. Treasurer), Jeremy Gilmore, Patrick Hamblin (Chairman of Planning & Traffic Panel), Lesley Heaney (Membership Secretary), Annabella Marks and Pauline Simmonds (Chairman of Education and Social Panel). Trefor Fisher has continued to play an active role as the Sonning Parish Council observer at committee meetings, further strengthening the links between the two organisations.

We are always keen to welcome new committee members and we were delighted that Carol McDiarmid joined the Committee during the year. Your outgoing committee is willing to stand for re-election although our Treasurer, Alan Furness, would like to stand down having held this position for the past 10 years so we are looking for a volunteer with an appropriate financial background to replace him.

With the addition of Carol the committee numbers exceed those in the constitution which is why there is an item in the Agenda for a change to the constitution in this respect. Your committee met six times during the year with good attendance at every meeting and as you will see within this report the panels have been very active. We are very fortunate to have such a strong and dedicated committee which is why we have decided to increase the size of the committee in order to retain this momentum from our committee members. The education panel has kept up a high standard of events with a wide variety of talks on interesting subjects, all of which have been very well attended, and the ever-popular Heritage Walks have continued. Our planning & traffic panel meets monthly in Sonning Club (thereby supporting other local organisations) and as you will read inside it has made many representations to Wokingham Borough Council both in favour and against planning applications.

Traffic and parking issues have been particularly troublesome this year and a new joint working group

has been forged with Sonning Parish Council to try to address some of these issues. We are looking forward to some success in reducing the parking and traffic problems in Sonning Lane. The new Headmaster of Reading Blue Coat School, Mr Jesse Elzinga (who is to deliver the after-dinner talk this evening) is keen to see improvements and has convened meetings with WBC, SPC and the Society to expedite the necessary changes to parking restrictions.



Large audience for Ali Driver's Colombian talk

This year saw a change to *Bridge*. Diana Coulter, who had edited all of the 50 issues from the Society's outset, had given us advance notice of her intention to stand down. The Committee decided to create a small editorial panel to take on this role and they produced issues 51 and 52 in a new expanded format of 8 sides. Jeremy Gilmore has done a great job in taking on the compilation and arranging the printing of the new-look *Bridge*; we are very

grateful to him for all his efforts not only for *Bridge* but also for the updated Society website.

This year also saw the finalisation of the Conservation Area Appraisal which was adopted by Wokingham Borough Council in February 2017. This was the culmination of a lot of hard work by many volunteers and will hopefully help WBC to ensure that planning applications take account of the character of the conservation area.

The Society is grateful to the Fire Brigade Trust who funded the supply and installation of the audio-visual system that you see in the hall tonight. It was successfully launched with a showing of a film by the Twinning Association last month and the committee has plans to start up a regular monthly film club in Pearson Hall. If anyone has an interest in helping to run this please let us know.

We have increased our membership during the year. We welcome our new members and thank them and our regulars for their interest and involvement in the Society's activities this year, details of which are given in the following pages.

