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**BENSON BULLETIN REPORT – MAR 2023**

AT LAST! Given we have no more Covid-19 nasty variants, with attendant social restrictions, we have the date for our AGM, March 25th and the venue - our recently extended **Parish Hall**. As already communicated to all members. Following the AGM there will be a party with both food and drink supplied by the Society and members are allowed to bring a guest. So, let us hope that it launches a successful post Covid-19 period and that we can get back to our role of providing a social environment that can help stimulate ways to make Benson an integrated village where people want to live.

Our talks Secretary, Fenella Galpin, has a varied and interesting series of talks planned for the rest of the year that include a talk by Wing Commander SP Fletcher MVO, MRA, Officer Commanding 33 Squadron RAF Benson and a wonderfully illustrated one from the internationally known wildlife photographer, Tom Way, on ‘Exciting Wildlife of the World’. Later in the year, David Barber, MVO, Swan Marker to Her Majesty the Queen, will talk to us about Swan Upping.

One of the aims of the Society is:

*“To promote the improvement of the benefit area by associating with the local authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation”.*

One of the ways we do this is to make donations to people or organisations that have the same or similar aims as the Society. Some of the money comes from the raffles we hold at each meeting and despite not having had a raffle in 2021 the Committee has decided to put to the AGM that we make three donations from reserves. We also decided that we would, at a suitable time, make a donation to help launch the ‘Benson Community Shed’. The BCS is a great project that the founders hope will help those in the community who, for various reasons, have a life with little interaction with others.

Yesterday, the 10th February, I heard from our Membership Secretary that he has already received 110 membership renewals, which is a greater % of our membership than we usually get before the AGM. This is a fantastic result given we have not met for almost 2 years and, banging our own drum, I hope shows just how much the Society is valued. It is also a tribute to all the members who have helped in many ways to keep the Society relevant in what has been a trying time.

Finally, another reminder to take part in the Council’s CIL survey, see:

<https://bensonpc.org.uk/2022/01/15/cil-survey-update/>

By participating you will be seizing one of the very few opportunities that come our way to influence our Parish Council’s priorities in how they spend our money and help to make……….”Benson fit for the future”.

Seeing the first daffodils and crocuses out in our garden prompts me to wish you all a joyous spring!

David McGill