

BOOKER COMMON AND WOODS PROTECTION SOCIETY

(Registered Charity: No. 289871)

NEWSLETTER No. 22 APRIL 1988

If you have paid your 1987/8 Annual subscription and/or have donated to the Fighting Fund, and no receipt is attached, please phone H.W. 21994 or 25665.

MON JUN 13th

RECEIPT for 1987/8 Annual Subs.

RECEIPT for Fighting Fund Donation.

NOTICE of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

on

Monday 23 May 1988 at 8pm

at

BOOKER MEMORIAL HALL on Booker Common

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EROSION of the GREEN BELT

could result in losses as great as at the height of the enclosure movement. This would be to the detriment of us all and to future generations. We must inform ourselves and be ready to fight back.

At 9pm (approx) KATE ASHBROOK, General Secretary of 'THE OPEN SPACES SOCIETY' will speak on Common Lands, Green Belt and the implications of Ministry of Agriculture's Consultation Document "An Extensification Scheme". This is a new factor in the race for space which will affect us all.

NON-MEMBERS who intend to join the local Booker Common Society are invited to attend the AGM from 8pm.

OTHER NON-MEMBERS are invited to join at 9pm, but only if resident in Booker/Sands. (Regrettably the limited capacity of the Hall precludes wider invitation.)

OUR NON-MEMBER GUESTS are respectfully asked to observe the Rule that members only are entitled to vote on Society affairs.

INTRODUCING The O.S.S.

The Open Spaces Society was founded in 1865 as the Commons Preservation Society and is Britain's oldest conservation body. Originally formed to save urban open spaces from development, its early victories included Hampstead Heath and Wimbledon Common. It is now the principal organisation campaigning for the protection and proper management of common land and village greens, and is in the vanguard of the battle for the new law for common land which the government has promised to introduce 'when parliamentary time permits'.

The OSS also fights for open spaces and public paths, and the rights of the public to use and enjoy them.

It has 2500 members including local authorities, organisations (including Booker Common Society), and individuals. Its secretary is Kate Ashbrook, former secretary to the Dartmoor Preservation Association and now footpath secretary to the Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area of the Ramblers Association, and a member of the RA's national executive committee.

BOOKER COMMON & WOODS PROTECTION SOCIETY aim is to protect the amenities and environment of your local countryside.

The Society serves the community at two levels:-

- As a volunteer workforce engaged in continuous conservation & restoration programmes in your local heritage of Booker Common & its Woodlands.
- As a forum for expression of local opinion - and organised to respond immediately against attempts to develop your 'Green Belt & Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' to the detriment of the public.

A G E N D A

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (20 May 1987) by Hon Sec.
2. ANNUAL REPORTS on past year's activity by Chairman and Hon Treasurer (Audited accounts attached)
3. MEMBERS VOTE the Annual Subscription for 1988/9
4. QUESTION TIME on Reports in item 2 above.
5. PROPOSALS for future Conservation Activity and for future protection of the local countryside.
6. VOTE of THANKS to the outgoing committee.
7. ELECTION of COMMITTEE for 1988/9; and the offices of Chairman; Deputy Chairman; Hon Secretary; Hon Treasurer.
8. Any Other Business. --000--

AGM followed by: Kate Ashbrook, Secretary of The Open Spaces Society: "THE GREEN BELT" (Crisis or Watershed?)

NEW COMMITTEE for 1988/9

Subscribing members are invited to offer themselves for election to the new year's committee. Please phone nominations before 16 May 1988 to High Wycombe 25665.

Present list of candidates for the new committee are:-
Mesdames: Rita Luxton; Lyn Pearce (present Deputy-Chair); Caynor Taffurelli (present Hon Secretary);
Claire Wylot. Messrs: Paul Baker; Syd Codling;
David Crowther (present Hon Treasurer); Allan Diggin (present Chairman); Rodney Forrest; Tony Hall;
Graham Jenner; Andrew Morgan; Ronald Walker;
David Wilmot; Also nominations to represent both Booker Women's Institutes.

FIGHT BACK! - then Keep on fighting!

YOUR local 'Green Belt & AONB' is at increasingly high risk of total despoilation. Not just for you in your lifetime, but your children and their children may never enjoy their proper heritage as you do today.

The proposed 200 acre Motorway Service Area at Booker is only the latest in a long series of attempts to breach your Green Belt/AONB. It won't be the last because:-

The developing network of Motorways will increase the pressure that already exists to get more build-land in Southeast England - in the Green Belt/AONB. The resulting high profits benefit the few at the expense of the many.

If through lack of 'fighting spirit' we leave a legacy of despoiled environment to our children's children, they will hold us in contempt - and rightly so.

With one exception, all previous attempts have been successfully resisted. The exception was the Football Stadium in the Sands Green Belt/AONB. This was lost following their Appeal to Secretary of State.

This is one battle lost against several battles won -(including that of the 6 Hangers in your Green Belt when all the odds were against winning).

The Football Stadium might be considered as our 'Dunkirk' to strengthen resolve to fight harder, and ensure that no more battles are lost.

It is for this purpose that this Society inaugurated the "Green Belt & AONB Fighting Fund" to pay towards fees for professional Consultants to represent the peoples' case at any Public Inquiry - and to enable the Society to keep fighting. PLEASE SUPPORT THE FIGHTING FUND and ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO SO.

WE ARE NOT ALONE

This Society has constantly supported Wycombe District Council's resistance to several recent attempts to develop your local Green Belt/AONB. We are the voters and our support gives added weight to the Council's efforts in the face of Appeals to The Secretary of State.

In turn, this Society is supported and guided by the more experienced National and Regional Environmental Societies to whom we are affiliated:-

i.e. The Open Spaces Society; Council for the Protection of Rural England; Airfields Environment Federation; The Giltmeston Society; High Wycombe Society; British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

All these give us the benefit of their long experience, and their guidance has helped shape this Society into an effective fighting force.

'GREEN BELT & AONB FIGHTING FUND'

The Fighting Fund has now passed the £2,000 mark at the time of writing, and continues to grow week by week. But local residents resources are limited, they alone cannot provide the total sum which will eventually be required.

SOME COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS undoubtedly share the horror of residents at the proposed destruction of the Green Belt/AONB by other commercial organisations.

With typical Booker individual initiative some members have taken the lead in talking to their employers about it - suggesting that local people have demonstrated that they are worth sponsoring.

SPONSORSHIP by Commercial Companies whether small or large could solve the problem. For example -if small companies donated 1 penny for every £1 donated by residents, each donation would add £20 to the Fund (at the time of writing). Similarly, large Companies matching 10p per £1 would produce £200, and matching £1 per £1 would produce £2000.

DONORS have the option of sending contributions to Hon Treasurer of the Society, or direct to the designated 'Fighting Fund A/c No 289871' at Barclays Bank Plc, Booker Branch, 197/9, New Road, Booker, High Wycombe HP12 4RQ.

Alternatively, some may prefer to promise to donate a given sum immediately it becomes necessary to pay fees of Consultants.

As a Registered Charity this Society operates ^{/ing} according to Charity Commission Rules - and to whom we are obliged to submit audited accounts for scrutiny in order to retain our charity status.

THE WISHES OF THOSE preferring to remain anonymous will be respected.

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES please phone High Wycombe 21994 or 25665.

WYCOMBE AIR PARK

The Society has supported, with a 4-page statement, Wycombe District Council's request to Department of Transport to 'Specify' the Air Park in an order made under Section 5(3) of Civil Aviation Act 1982.

If the application is successful it will impose a duty on Civil Aviation Authority, in exercising their aerodrome licensing function, to have regard to the need to minimise so far as reasonably practicable:-

- a) any adverse effects on the environment, and
- b) any disturbance to the public,

from noise and vibration, atmospheric pollution or any other cause attributable to the use of aircraft for the use of civil aviation.

Many members have also written individually supporting the Council's efforts to secure a reasonable and balanced solution.

PHASE 5: RESTORATION & CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Rubbish clearance on the edge of the woodlands in the Arundel Road/Highwood Avenue has been started by the Society. (There are tonnes of it!)

After clearance and landscaping, indigenous wild-flower and varieties of grasses will be sown.

Approx 400 indigenous trees will be planted in the Autumn - mostly Beech to replace recent losses.

Special thanks to the volunteers, and to Wycombe District Council who have made a grant, under their European Year of the Environment Scheme, of up to £2,000 towards cost of materials.

L A T E S T N E W S

THE PETITION results to date show overwhelming opposition by Booker/Sands residents to a Motorway Service Area at Booker. Door-to-door calls are continuing. But more helpers are needed to properly cover this large area.

We need thousands of signatures to make a big impact at a Public Inquiry and, if necessary, to petition the European Parliament.

James Elles, our MEP, has informed us of procedures, and would pass our petition to the President of the European Parliament.

(Helpers please phone: H W 25665)