

# Booker Common & Woods Protection Society

(Registered Charity : No.289871)

This Society operates in accordance with the rules of the Charity Commission

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**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
combined with  
CONSULTATION MEETING  
about the  
REVIEW OF THE WYCOMBE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN  
at  
8.00 p.m. Wednesday 21st May, 1997 at Booker Memorial  
Hall, Booker Common (off Limmer Lane)**

**GUEST SPEAKER is Mr. David Turner, Head of Planning  
Policy and Economic Development for Wycombe District  
Council**

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He will discuss the changing conditions and 'proposed' revisions to the Local Plan to deal with those changes. Wycombe District Council's proposals are now being put forward for public consultation.

Due account will be taken of all public objections to the proposed revisions to the existing Local Plan before your elected Councillors decide on the final draft for a later Public Inquiry. The Head of Planning Policy will be present to hear your views on how best to protect your local environment during the next 15 years.

This meeting provides your best opportunity to help shape your future environment for your children. Every voice counts. If you don't speak up now then don't complain about conversion from greenfields to brick and concrete afterwards.

In its 15 years of existence this environment Society's policy has been (i) Practical conservation work by volunteers in the local woodlands, and (ii) Active opposition to every application to erode the Green Belt/AONB boundaries on the western side of the town.

The Council's preliminary questionnaire last year included the Sands greenfield Area of Special Restraint/AONB as a potential site for housing. It is said that the Council is no longer considering the site for housing **but for commercial or industrial purposes instead**. We shall hear the facts at the combined AGM and Consultation Meeting.

The Society's stance remains. It is - no buildings of any kind whatsoever that encroaches the Green Belt/AONB on the western side of the town.

Apart from the factor of preserving the countryside there is also the factor of public safety. The Sands ASR/AONB site is an emergency aircraft landing ground as much as the MSA site at Booker. There have been three emergency landings on the proposed MSA site at Booker and one fatal crash landing on the Sands emergency aircraft landing site.

At the MSA Public Inquiry the Society presented a witness who, after taking off had actually crashed on the MSA site and caught fire. The Dept of

Environment Inspector in his Report said that the consequences of an aircraft crashing on the MSA buildings would be 'dire'. The same could be said for the Society members resident on the western hillside of Booker Hill Ridge at Rydal Way; Carisbrooke Avenue; Warwick Avenue and Arundel Road.

Another crash landing on buildings on the Sands greenfield and potential explosion could be dire for these residents, not least from flying glass.

The summary of the new Local Plan has now been delivered to the householders and shows that this Sands greenfield is earmarked as an overflow car park from Adams Park. This could be just as dangerous as a MSA car park at Booker.

We look to these residents to attend the meeting and speak up for themselves, and support the Society Committee view that (i) Any buildings permitted on these two sites would be an irresponsible Councillor's decision (ii) The Sands ASR designation should be upgraded to Green Belt in the revised Local Plan to be consistent with surrounding countryside.

At the Public Inquiry following the previous review of Local Plan four years ago, the Society retained the services of a Legal/Planning Adviser to object to the Council's omission to upgrade the Sands ASR/AONB site to Green Belt status and to question why a site can logically be designated an Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) but not Green Belt when all adjoining countryside was Green Belt.

The Inspector did not uphold the Society's objection. The opposing Solicitor, quite properly, drew the Dept. of Environment Inspector's attention to lack of attendance at the Inquiry by affected residents.

We shall never know whether this affected the Inspector's report, but the moral is to leave nothing to chance. If you don't object your view cannot be considered.

## CONDENSED AGENDA

AGM routine business needs to be drastically condensed to allow maximum possible time for you to put your questions to David Turner.

1. Minutes of AGM held on 20 May 1996
2. Short reports by Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Conservation Secretary
3. Annual subscription for 1997/8
4. Election of 1997/8 Committee
5. Confirmation of existing basic policies of Society
6. Any other business.

### NEW COMMITTEE 1997/8

Subscribing members are invited to offer themselves for election to the new year's committee. Please phone nominations before 18 May 1997 to High Wycombe 525665.

Members of the existing 1996/7 committee comprise:

Mesdames Rita Luxton and Claire Wylot (pres. Membership Secretary)

Messrs. Paul Baker, David Crowther (pres. Hon. Treasurer), Allan Duggin (pres. Chairman), Rodney Forrest, Tony Hall, Brian Petty, Tim Speechley, Mike Stevens, Vic West, Ronald Walker (pres. Conservation Secretary).

The object of Society is the preservation of the local countryside for the benefit of the public. For the past 15 years this has involved:

- (i) Practical conservation work by Society volunteers on the local Urban Commons.
- (ii) Active opposition to any further building development within the adjacent Green Belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which are not strictly within the terms of exceptions permitted under the agreed planning policies.

### SOCIETY BASIC POLICIES

- (i) Practical conservation work by volunteers on the Urban Commons within Society's resources.
- (ii) To campaign against any intrusion or building development within the local Green Belt/AONB boundary on this western side of the town.
- (iii) To campaign against any developments likely to increase ambient noise or air pollution, and where possible to campaign to reduce them.

## LATE NEWS

### Wycombe Air Park and Control of Aircraft Noise

Wycombe Air Park Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) have now published a booklet giving guidance to residents in the Wycombe District. It contains a map showing where you live in relation to the aircraft circuit routes, Noise Abatement Zones (NAZs) and procedures for making complaints when aircraft breach the Noise Abatement Zones.

Complaints must be made at the time of the occurrence otherwise it is impossible for the Air Park Management to take corrective action.

The direct complaint phone lines to the Air Park are (01494) 529261 and/or 523426.

Copies of this valuable booklet will be available at the combined AGM and Consultative Meeting on 21 May 1997. Those unable to attend the Meeting will be advised of the nearest point where they may pick up a copy by phoning (01494) 525665.

### AN MSA ECHO

The Secretary of State for the Environment has awarded Booker Common & Woods Protection Society partial costs against Mobil Oil Co. Ltd.

It is unusual for third parties at Public Inquiries to be awarded costs. Our case was that the Society obeyed the Inquiry Rules by declaring 6 months prior to the Hearing that we would present 5 witnesses, including 2 expert witnesses on Air Pollution caused by vehicle exhaust gas; also delivered witnesses proofs of evidence 3 months prior to the Hearing.

This allowed Mobil ample time to submit a written rebuttal and prepare questions for cross examining our witnesses.

A few days prior to the Hearing Mobil declared a surprise expert witness who would give evidence on Air Quality, and later produced a highly technical Proof of Evidence. This left our expert witnesses insufficient time to examine the evidence and comment on its validity.

This obviously gave unfair advantage to Mobil and the Society lodged objection. In the event Mobil were defeated anyway. The Society supported Wycombe District Council, the main adversary, throughout the lengthy 5 month Public Inquiry.

Partial costs were eventually agreed at a nominal £200.00. We would have preferred to have been given sufficient time to question the validity of their case more thoroughly. However, the £200.00 is held in our Green Belt/AONB fund, ready to take on anybody else who tries to breach these greenfields.