



Woodsman

The Booker Common & Woods Protection Society

Registered Charity No.289871

Newsletter No. 47 April 1999

Society News

**Annual General Meeting at Booker Memorial Hall
Wednesday 26th May 1999 at 8pm
Guest Speaker:
Sally Wright WDC
Waste, Recycling and The Environment**

Everyone is invited.

The constitution of the Society and its committee remains the same as at the last AGM.

This must be high on the agenda.

Some members have been around since the society was established. An infusion of new blood and ideas may be long overdue.

Here is a list of current members of the committee, with their duties or particular interests:

Ron Walker Chair:

Claire Wylot Hon. Sec.

David Crowther Hon. Treas.

Colin Kennedy Planning

Tony Hall Transport

Brian Petty Airfield JCC

Paul Baker

Rita Luxton

Tim Speechley

Mike Stevens

Vic West

All are pillars of the community, and are sure to address the

needs of the membership. Their addresses and telephone numbers are not supplied, since this would be an infringement of their privacy. However, should you know any of the members personally, I'm sure they will be prepared to discuss those aspects of the society and its objectives which concern individual members.

As suggested earlier, however, there is a need for change in any group, and any volunteer who can devote time to the Society is invited to attend a committee meeting to assess the value of what's going on and how they might contribute.

Societies similar to ours are in crisis. Since successive governments have *apparently* agreed to take over the protection of the environment, it has become obvious that a number of groups (no names) are thrashing about wildly looking for a cause. Apart from enlarging their databases, there doesn't appear to be one, so straws are being grasped.

Our environment cannot be protected from behind a desk. We hope the protection of our woodland is sufficient cause

The current prognosis is that growing old gracefully may well be the best option, creating an atmosphere where integrity is the byword, while being aware of potential threat. It is also apparent that the views of mature societies, carry more weight than those of cause-related newly-formed groups.

We will encourage appropriate development, working with local councils and landowners to preserve the environment that we want.

Committee Action

Ron and Brenda Walker were invited to attend the WDC Chairman's Annual Reception on Thursday 4th Feb together with Allan Duggin former Chairman of BCWPS. It was an excellent opportunity for Ron to meet those members and associates of Allan who have been, and hopefully will continue to be, helpful to the society.

Allan was presented with a plaque bearing the High Wycombe coat of arms as Ted Collin's appreciation of his contribution to Booker. (There was also a vaguely cylindrical shaped object wrapped in tissue with a ribbon on - I wonder what it could have been).

On 20th October, Ron attended a Local Area Public Forum in the Town Hall regarding Council Tax and the services provided therefrom. There was a question and answer session, a copy of which was forwarded later. Non-WDC matters were referred to BCC.

Brian Petty and Hedley Luxton attended the JCC of Booker Air Park. Control of helicopters is currently the predominant issue. However, as previously advised, any specific complaint should be made as soon as possible after the event with details to 01494529261. Remember that the management of the Air Park are just as interested in aircraft safety as we are. Bad publicity equals bad business. Any other Airfield JCC matters should be discussed with Brian at the AGM.

Planning

Colin Kennedy has been keeping a close eye on planning matters. Here is a resumé of recent significant applications:

1. Aerial for Cellular Radio on High Heavens. This was not opposed by the Society, being of little environmental impact.

Rejected.

2. Another Hangar and extension to present one, by Dr Batts. Society objected.

Rejected - Dr Batts is again appealing to the Secretary of State for the Environment.

3. A further storage hangar at Wycombe Air Park.

Details not to hand as this is being written. (Soon be more hangars than aircraft).

4. Two buildings at High Heavens landfill site to accommodate generators and gas plant; the objective being to burn methane gas from the tip, generating electricity and feeding to the grid. There will be a 7m high flare for waste gas.

In committee, we agreed not to object to this application since it was a safer and "greener" alternative to allowing hazardous gas to escape and further damage the ozone layer.

Note: The purchase of Weekly Planning Bulletins represents a significant element of our budget, however, should any member feel we have missed, or are missing anything, please bring it to our attention.

Environment

Looking after itself?

There was a disappointing turnout for the November Common Tidy. Please be aware that your committee are not here to clean up the woods and paths. We need substantial physical help.

There are a few bollards missing at the top of the woods and volunteers are required to replace those also.

Ron has a couple of repaired boards to put in at the north end of the common, and will be looking for volunteers shortly.

The off-loading of tyres in the woods appears to be endemic. Again, thanks to Peter H for moving them to the roadside for collection, and to WDC for prompt removal. If anyone knows who is responsible, please inform the police. Representations are still being made to the appropriate waste disposal authority to try to alleviate the "dumping" pressure due to land-fill charges.

We were recently asked by Wycombe District Council if the Society wished Booker Common to be designated as a dog-fouling free zone. Obviously this is a draconian exercise - since dogs must go somewhere; but the pressure on our area has increased owing to the designation of most of the rest of the town. (The objective is obviously to have owners remove their dogs' faeces from public areas). We, instead, asked for the "maintained" areas of the Common to be designated, and that strategically placed bins be provided. Regrettably, the owner does not want the property to be designated, on the grounds that it is woodland, and is therefore not governed by the act. We intend to progress this further in the hope that some healthy compromise may be reached.

Plastic bagging the faeces and throwing it into the bushes is *not* a solution, nor is tying the plastic bags in trees..... Yes, I'm afraid so - no names - yet, but we do know the person concerned and it's not very clever!

There is still no solution to the Insurance indemnity of volunteers working on the highway, on which we believed we had an agreement with WDC when we first supplied and installed bollards. However, the society is insured for other voluntary work through a BCVS arranged insurance. The maintenance of bollards on Lane End Road and Homes Lane remains at a standstill.

Last year, a Botanical Survey of the AONB/ASR was commissioned by BCWPS, and undertaken by Angus Idle of Wycombe Wildlife Group.

This is a comprehensive, though to the layman a somewhat formal list, and is available to any interested member on request.

On the other hand, there are even more bluebells this year due to more open space, and cowslips have again increased. This is something the writer understands as a measure of the health of woodlands.

Footpaths

The footpath Order connecting FP 111/112 to FP 113 and FP143 on Newmer Common has been approved. The order was published 22nd Jan and appeared in the Bucks Free Press on 5th February. Obviously the diversion round Walnut House, has been approved. As of the 1st April deadline no objection was received.

We will liaise with the footpaths officers of BCC to clear the access and improve an excellent walk.

Any more information?? See you at the AGM. Publishing the details takes up more space than we have in this newsletter.

Media

The Bucks Free Press is again carrying a Booker Local News column. This Society will be keeping in touch with and through the author to publicise our actions and intentions.

Subscriptions

Collectors are again required for annual subscriptions in two areas:

Booker Common, and Highfield Avenue/Graham Drive.

If you can afford an evenings work in a worthy cause, contact Claire on 535071.

Also, if you have paid your subs for this year, and there is no receipt attached to your Newsletter, call Claire as above, or Ron Walker on 444824.