



Woodsmen

The Booker Common & Woods Protection Society

Registered Charity No.289871

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So what has your Society done for you this year? The editor has had to consult his "Author's Handbook of Imaginative Writing" to report anything worthy of note.

Annual General Meeting.

Attendance this year was much higher than of late, whether this was because of the lack of football on television owing to the change of day to Monday, or the widely advertised presentation by Nigel Snell of The English Kite Society.

Your Chairman, Ron Walker, was re-elected for a further year. The Hon Treasurer, David Crowther stepped down after 16 years owing to work pressure, leaving the Society on a sound financial footing. Chris Wylot replaces David. The following existing members were re-elected: Rita Luxton, Claire Wylot (Membership Sec.), Tony Hall, Paul Baker, Vic West, Tim Speechley, Mike Stevens, Colin Kennedy and Brian Petty.

There were reports on Planning (Colin), Finance (David), Brian (Airpark - JCC), Environment (Ron) and Membership (Claire).

For those of you who did not attend, here is the gist of Nigel's presentation. Red kites have a five foot wingspan and are basically carrion eaters, not raptors. The indigenous population died out in the 1800s due to mistaken shooting and poisoning. Since 1989 they have been re-introduced successfully to the Chilterns. They nest high in beech trees living up to 25 years and pairing for life. The programme has been so successful, that some Chiltern chicks are now being re-located to another breeding group in Yorkshire. With the assistance of a few (excellent) slides Nigel provided a very interesting and amusing diversion.

Committee

Regrettably, since the AGM, Brian Petty has left the area, moving to Norfolk. We wish him luck. Brian, who was our representative on the Wycombe Air Park JCC, is replaced by Hedley Luxton; co-opted due to his regular attendance at the airfield public meetings, his experience and strong opinion. Lucky old Hedley, just as Brian was leaving, we received a huge and rather complex questionnaire from the DETR Aviation Group regarding the "Control of noise from Civil Aircraft". With the assistance of the committee, Hedley replied to this, with what we hope would be the common opinion of local residents. It is impossible to consult every individual in such circumstances, there were 19 questions, some of which were quite complex. (If anyone would like to see the questions and/or the Societies replies, please contact Ron on 444824). Other local bodies, including Wycombe Air Park and WDC were also consulted.

The Aviation Environment Federation, of which your society is a member, sent a briefing note on Air Traffic Forecasts, showing a projected increase in passenger numbers from 160 million to 400 million by 2020. This increase equates to four new airports the size of Heathrow or eight the size of Gatwick. Suggested methods of inhibiting this increase is aviation fuel tax and VAT on air travel tickets. This, however, would only hold back increases to 220 million. Farnborough has just been earmarked for massive development. Now Biggin Hill for private commercial. Who's next?

Planning

Two significant applications for development on the Airfield site, to both of which this society had objected, were rejected this year. The first, for a transfer station for rubbish was appealed against on the grounds of increase of heavy traffic and Green Belt intrusion. The second, for extension to a hangar was rejected, on appeal, as being contrary to the Wycombe Plan and unnecessary "conflict with the aim of the Green Belt of openness and with the aim of safeguarding against encroachment in the countryside". (Quote from Appeals Inspector). We hope to use this sort decision as a precedent. Again Colin would like anyone who is aware of unusual planning applications in the common area to notify the Society. We *think* we get all the Planning Applications from WDC.

Environment

Only one burn-out on the common in the past six months. I'm sure the owner of a very nice LWB Land Rover wouldn't appreciate the "only", but it's an improvement for us. Eight bollards were replaced, not all to do with this incident

The Open Spaces Society are celebrating the Rights of Way Bill going to the Lords. At present this Society is more concerned about the rights of way of those who continually apply for development on the Green Belt. Apparently the D of E Inspector would not oppose the building of motorway service area in Green Belt on the M40 between Oxford and Paddington. Watch this space??

Again, we continued to press for reduction in traffic along Bridleway 106. The Rights of Way replied with an excellent and logical letter. The answer, however, is still no. We are now trying to have it signposted.

Litter was collected on October 15th. The usual group turned out. Fortunately there wasn't a great deal of litter, around 30 bags plus bits of car batteries old cans etc., but we ought to consider selling wheel trims to assist our finances. We really need more help on these occasions - twice a year - for an hour, surely more of you can help, especially down by the Lane End Road. Please phone if you can spare the time.

Subscriptions

It's that time of year again! Collectors will shortly be out collecting subscriptions for the year April 2000 to March 2001. This year we are planning that each collector will have a photocard for identification purposes as it was felt that these were needed to show people if asked. You'll be pleased to hear that the subs remain at £3.00 per household and, as always, receipts will be issued with the spring newsletter. We are very lucky this year, as Claire hopes that we will have collectors for all roads; last year we had to resort to postal collections which are not nearly so effective. However, we do need a volunteer collector for Willow Avenue and we would also like to split the Squirrel Lane collection into two smaller groups (odds and evens). Please consider if you can help - call Claire Wylot Membership Secretary on HW535071. And of course, a **big thank you** to all current collectors without whom the society would not exist.