



# 8 Woodsman

*The Booker Common and Woods Protection Society*

*Registered Charity No.289871*

*Newsletter No.61 Autumn 2004*

## **Brief Report on Annual General Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> May 2004**

The Chairman, Rita Luxton, welcomed those who had made the effort to attend and thanked all who had contributed to the Society's activities this year.

Rita then introduced Julie Hopton from the Wycombe Ranger Service, who awarded The Allan Duggin Memorial Award to Jennifer Taylor from Wooburn Moor. This is the first presentation of this award inaugurated by the society. Future awards will be judged by Wycombe District Council's environmental group. Reports and photos in Bucks Free Press.

The planned presentation by Stuart Dale of Tilhill Forestry Ltd was cancelled at short notice due to ill-health. Julie Hopton stepped into the breach with an excellent presentation with slides on the work of the Ranger Service, stressing the apparent lack of appreciation by locals of the Chilterns woods. She said that the woodland devastation of the hurricanes of 1987 and 1990 had concentrated the minds of many, so that a Woodlands Strategy for the next 30 years had evolved. But memories are short, and enthusiasm was waning, however the Ranger Service was still involved in many projects in the 29 local woods for which they have been given a mandate by local owners and parish councils. This includes scrub clearing, rubbish collection and improvement of access, putting up bird boxes, dead hedging with cut material to deter deer damage and clearing of ponds.

The minutes of last year's AGM were agreed.

### **Planning**

Colin Kennedy reported on planning matters that had arisen during the last year. There had not been a great deal of locally specific proposals, but Colin had found it much easier to identify on-line what may be deemed appropriate to the area. He had been invited to a number of consultations, some aimed at environmental groups and some at the public in general. One recently, entitled "Imagine the Future" speculated on what Wycombe would be like in 20 years time. Colin expressed disappointment that he seemed to be the only person there representing local interests.

### **Finance**

Hedley Luxton elaborated on our audited statement of accounts for last year, copies of which were available. He felt that in view of the membership base of around 300 households, we should have collected more subscriptions. This is a reflection both of the delay in collecting, and lack or shortage of collectors. We also need more Gift Aid Forms from members. We are, however, solvent.

### **Membership**

Tony Dunford reported on Membership and Subscriptions, thanking all collectors for their hard work and reiterating that we do need more collectors. He would like to fill "the empty spaces" of departed members. This is always going to be difficult while there are no perceived local environmental threats, or alternatively nothing conspicuous is being done by the Society.

### **Environment**

Ron Walker reported on this year's environmental work. He had been involved with the High Heavens Landfill Liaison committee, which had recently seen progress on the new composting facility. This was being done in a very environmentally friendly way, considering the size of the project, really 24 "bungalows" with sliding canvas roofs. How the compost produced by this facility will be disposed off remains a bit of a mystery.

A knock-on effect of this need to collect biodegradable waste is that it will be collected fortnightly

alternating with normal waste collection. This "less frequent" collection may result in increased fly-tipping.

As usual there were two litter collections in the woods. Those who volunteer for this tidy seem to be the same few were thanked for their efforts. It would be easier if a few more turned up. Encouragingly, for the last collection, of the 12 posters put up only one had been vandalised.

Ron also congratulated Rita on her persistence in getting the council to remove fly-tipping quickly. This way it isn't added to.

### **Other Business**

Michelle Green of "Woodside" requested that the members on the bridle path be kept informed of what's happening following the resurfacing at the south or Common end, and what further action is being taken to reduce speeding traffic. Hedley replied that the appropriate notices and "waisting" had been done, but there was reluctance on the part of the council and the land-owner to take further action. Michelle was invited to attend our next committee meeting.

The current serving committee was re-elected en bloc.

Rita Luxton (Chairman), Colin Kennedy (Planning), Tim Speechley (Secretary), Tony Dunford (Membership Sec.), Tony Hall, Paul Baker, Ron Walker and Vic West. Hedley Luxton is co-opted member to the JCC of the Air Park

### **News.**

We welcome new members with fresh ideas to the committee. The committee meet six times a year (including the AGM), at Booker Memorial Hall to discuss policy and implementation, normally on the last Monday of a month. The next committee meeting will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Any member wishing to contribute his/her time and attend is welcome.

Mr Darren Hayday was recently invited to, and attended one of the committee's meetings. His advice and contribution was very helpful.

### **Policy Statement**

1. To protect and enhance the environs of Booker Woods and Limmer Common within Society resources.
2. To campaign against the intrusion of any development, which may threaten the adjacent Green Belt and AONB.
3. To resist any development which may curtail enjoyment of the freedom of access to fresh air and exercise which the common affords.

We make no apologies for repeating this. It re-assures members of the Society's objectives, and to what they are contributing. If the committee is not doing what you want, let us know.

Bearing in mind our limited resources, our strength is chiefly in credulity as a genuine long-time environmental society, with no political axe to grind.

### **Planning**

There is currently serious concern at the state of Horns Lane, due to its increased usage. The condition of the partial kerbing and the drainage is totally inadequate for what is being used as a trunk road. The common usage, though *illegal* lay-bys, are a convenience for fly-tippers and dare I suggest incontinent drivers. Brian Stenner our local Bucks County Councillor is pressing for improvement. It may even provide an opportunity to footpath at least one side, since it is lethal to try to walk in the Lane itself. (We all have dreams).

### **Litter-picking**

The next litter collection takes place on Sunday October 24<sup>th</sup>. Please help. Meet below the Squirrel Pub at 11am. Stout boots and gloves required. Bags provided.

### **Collectors**

Tony Dunford desperately needs collectors for the Common area. If you can spare the time and energy, call Tony on 01494 523058. Help!