

Woodsman



The Booker Common and Woods Protection Society

Registered Charity No.289871

Newsletter No.69 Autumn 2008

27th Annual General Meeting 20th May 2008

The Chairman Rita Luxton welcomed a gratifyingly well attended meeting.

John Hall, from the Wycombe Ranger Service presented the Allan Duggin Memorial Award for Conservation to pupils of the Highcrest Community School for their huge effort in recovering Highfield Wood after the recent disturbances and laying a pathway using recycled Christmas tree chippings. Accepting on behalf of the school, Tania Decosemo, head of Year 9, said that her “Eco-ambassadors” had been encouraged by headmistress Miss Moynihan, to introduce environmentally sound practices at the school such as recycling and water and power conservation. Future projects included construction and siting of bird boxes.

John also provided feedback on the progress of last year’s winner, Sam Dixey-King who has been instrumental in step building with the Ranger Service.

Photographs were taken, and Rita then welcomed the Guest Speaker for the evening Richard Hearne on “Local Furniture making from the 1800s.”

Richard’s presentation addressed the period from 1840 when the firm was known as Dancer and Hearne, to the Parker Knoll takeover in the 1960s covering many aspects of the chair making profession, including the “bodgers” and pit sawing with later diversions to making wing spars for Mosquitos during the second world war. All agreed that it had been an excellent and comprehensive picture of the chairmakers’ industry and the meeting was paused for a short intermission to examine the artifacts that Richard had brought.

The AGM resumed with an approval of last year’s minutes.

Planning.

Colin Kennedy reported that there was little of consequence, with Ron Walker keeping the brief on High Heavens. Ten thousand trees having been planted and the grassed area returned to farming, Colin suggested that the recovery of an old footpath which traversed the site to Marlow Bottom should be investigated. Colin asked that anyone who could recollect the existence of such a footpath should contact him. It would be a pity if the trees and wild flower planting which had been undertaken at huge expense could not be fully appreciated.

Finance.

On behalf of Brian Wilson, Hedley Luxton reported on Finance and Membership and an audited statement of accounts was distributed. This year’s collection had gone fairly well, and as always a plea was made for additional collectors.

Environment.

Tim Speechley reported briefly on the rubbish collections in October 07 and March 08 and repairs which had been undertaken to the benches and bollards.

JCC.

Hedley reported that the lease for Wycombe Air Park was coming up for renewal in the near future, and that complaints from outlying areas of noise nuisance seemed to oppose its continuation as an airfield. The alternative suggestion of it being used for building could not be condoned by this society.

Communication.

Paul Baker confirmed that the Society website www.bcwps.org.uk, developed by himself and Katherine Belcher was now live. A page where members can comment was available. Paul was keen to add information on the immediate past, and asked for contributions.

Committee.

The current committee were re-elected en bloc. Paul then proposed that the presently co-opted members Katherine Belcher and Jeff Harvey be elected to the committee. This was seconded by Colin Kennedy and they were duly elected by a unanimous show of hands.

AOB.

Rita closed the meeting thanking all the collectors, Brian who had so well collated Membership and Finance, and Paul and Katherine for setting up the web site.

Environment

Seats on the common.

The Society has funded the refurbishment of seats around the common and thanks should be addressed to Jeff Harvey for his organisation and work in repairing and painting same. Some of the original wooden seats carried dedication plaques most of which have been lost to vandalism. If anyone knows of the original form of the dedication, the Society would be pleased to assist in re-dedicating.

Bollards.

A working party (volunteers welcome) has been organised for **Sunday 12th October** to replace bollards at the common edge, opposite Booker Memorial Hall. Tools will be provided, stout shoes and gloves should be worn. Scheduled for **11am**, this should take less than two hours.

Squirrel damage in the woodland.

Many of our members have reported damage to the bark on the lower trunks of mature trees and the stripping of bark on the upper branches of younger trees. This has been a particularly serious problem this year due to the increasing numbers of Grey Squirrel. In the spring they eat the emerging shoots on the upper branches and chew the bark, but as the summer progresses, young males strip the upper branches in what appears to be frustration. The diversity of the Booker woodland is being adversely affected as the squirrels seem more likely to attack the beech, oak and hornbeam, allowing the ash to survive and dominate. Control is difficult in public places but the Dashwood Estate is prepared to supply traps through the Society for member's use. Please note that when caught the animals must be disposed of humanely - it is an offence to release squirrels into other locations. Be aware that this society paid for and planted many of the trees on the east side of the woods, and it would be a shame to lose them now after so many years.

Communication.

Web site www.BCWPS.org.uk . Have you visited? Had your say? Please use this site, we need your feedback to ensure we have it right.

Membership Subscriptions for 2008/09.

Our volunteers will be collecting this year's subscriptions at your door shortly. Three pounds per household per year is all we ask, (however, any additional contribution to our "fighting fund" for possible legal services will be appreciated). The primary contribution enables us to maintain the society - clearing litter twice a year from the common and woodland, installing and repairing bollards and barriers (deterring vehicles from access and fly-tipping), strimming path edges, monitoring planning in the area, informing members of any incursion on to Green Belt. We are represented on the Joint Consultative Committee of the Air Park and High Heavens Waste Disposal Liaison Committee, try to keep members informed of any changes and development in our area and are also your voice in local issues. We need your help in maintaining these aims, disseminating information, collecting subscriptions and delivering newsletters.

Litter picking

Autumn collection is on Sunday **5th October 11 am** , starting below the Squirrel, at the south end of Rydal Way and south end of Highwood Ave. Good gloves and footwear are required by our insurers. Bags will be supplied.