



# Woodsmen

The Booker Common and Woods Protection Society  
*For the Common Good*©

Registered Charity No.289871

Newsletter 100 Winter 2024

## Our 100<sup>th</sup> Newsletter

In July 1984, forty years ago, the Booker Common & Woods Protection Society was registered with the Charity Commission and this is our 100<sup>th</sup> newsletter.

The group was actually started in 1982 and by the time of registration had produced 10 newsletters. Unfortunately, the only ones we have are number 2 and number 9, with 9 being the call to the AGM at which the formal constitution registered with the Charity Commission was agreed.



Reading these early newsletters, it is clear that Booker Common was very different in 1982 to what we all now enjoy.

The 'spring clean-up' that year collected some 2 tonnes of rubble and 5 tonnes of other rubbish, not including the burnt cars that were still to be removed. Fly tipping in the woods by the lorry load was a major issue, there were fires (three that year) and walkers were being put at risk by vehicles driving on the common.



Then, just as the Society was getting on top of the fly-tipping, restricting vehicle access and making good progress in restoring the woodland, plans were submitted for a huge 23-acre motorway service station.

Spread across both sides of the motorway the station would run along the edge of the common and be expected to handle 1000s of vehicles every day.

With this threat to the area many new members joined the society to support the campaign against the service station and as we all know it succeeded.

Forty years later, thanks to all the work by volunteers the common has been transformed from what it was in 1982 to what we have today. A rich and safe area of countryside that we can all enjoy. We continue with our twice-yearly litter picks but thankfully we no longer have to remove tonnes of rubbish, and we continue to maintain the grass and the footpaths.

Currently there are no development plans that directly threaten the common. But the Council has removed adjacent land from the green belt and there are plans for houses, industrial units and even a proposal for a data centre, all of which will impact the area.

The work of the society and the support of our members to protect the common is as important today as it was in 1982.

If you would like to read any of our old newsletters they can be found on our website.

[www.bookercommon.org.uk](http://www.bookercommon.org.uk)

## **Commons Diary**

*(To be confirmed)*

Sunday March 16<sup>th</sup> – Spring Litter Blitz

**Monday May 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Booker Common & Woods Protection Society AGM**

Monday May 26<sup>th</sup> - Car Boot Sale

*In aid of Booker and District Horticultural Society*

## **The Triangle**

A regular activity for our volunteers is to cut and rake the area below the Squirrel pub known, for obvious reasons as the Triangle. This year was no exception.



In June we were helped by some enthusiastic volunteers from Red Kite Community Housing who worked to open up the footpath and in September the whole area was, as usual, cut back and cuttings raked into the trees.



What makes this effort worthwhile can be seen every summer when a raft of wild flowers bloom. Look closely and together with the Meadow Cranesbill, Cow Parsley and Hedge Bedstraw you will find many other wild flowers including Burdock, Red Campion, Chicory, Doves-foot Cranesbill, Cut-leaved Cranesbill, Lady's Bedstraw, Hemp Agrimony, Mint, and Ragwort.

## **Litter Pick**

Despite the bad weather a number of hardy litter pickers did a fantastic job clearing rubbish from the common and the road margins. Some worked during the weekend, others on Monday when the weather improved.

Sadly, the change to the law last year has made no difference at all to numbers of nitrous oxide gas canisters being discarded on and around the common. Making possession of the canisters for misuse an offence has had no effect. Canisters are still being sold to those who intend to misuse them and it would appear there is little if any enforcement of the law.



## **Membership and Subscriptions**

Thanks to everyone who continues to support our work. If you are not already one of our members and would like to make a contribution you can do so directly to our Barclays bank account at:

Account Name: **Booker Common and Woods Protection Society**

Account Number: **20177806**

Sort Code: **20-40-71**

We ask for a small annual subscription of just £4.00 per household. Thank you

[www.bookercommon.org.uk](http://www.bookercommon.org.uk)