

AGM SPECIAL

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT AGM

More than 80 Members and friends packed the tennis club at BWT's Annual General Meeting on 2 September 2010. Peter Willson, the then Deputy Chairman of BWT, welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the chair in the unavoidable absence of Chairman, Richard Ashness.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Peter presented the Chairman's review of the year. Highlights were as follows:

The Biffa Awards In late 2009 BWT won both 'Best in Category' and 'Best in UK' awards, with cheques totalling £7000 (see Issue 18).

The Tractor Barn Following completion of Phase 1 by 20 Field Squadron REs, Phase 2 had been carried out and completed successfully by Dave Johnson and his team of volunteers (see Issue 18). Peter congratulated them for all the hard work and for saving BWT considerable sums of money.

The Mobility Scooter Now ready for use and would be available from October 2010 (see page 5).

Further details of these highlights can be found on the website:

www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org/latestnews



What's inside this issue:

AGM Special	pages 1-5
Environmental Update	page 6
New Look Website	page 6
Walking Through	page 7
Why We Love BWT	page 7
Thanks	page 8
Contact Information	page 8

AGM SPECIAL • AGM SPECIAL

As the Deputy Chairman, Peter Willson confirmed he was standing down from this role, and the meeting agreed the adoption of John Wale to succeed him.

Peter was thanked for his sterling efforts in working for BWT since its inception. However, Peter will not be disappearing as he is still a Trustee, Management Committee member and is Honorary Life President.

John is a retired civil engineer who has lived in Bearsted for 36 years. He is also a Foundation Governor at Thurnham CE Infant School and a bellringer at Holy Cross. He has been a maintenance volunteer at BWT since 2008 and says he loves the environment, the work and the “can do spirit” in BWT. We all wish John the best in his new role.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Dave Johnson (Maintenance and Projects Manager), David Ward (Trees and Benches), and Chris Street (Membership and Records) were co-opted as members of BWT Management Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

This covered the two major projects which Sharon Bayne, our Environmental Consultant, has been conducting on our behalf:

(i) The Woodland Project designed, in the long-term, to enrich the ecology of the BWT site. It involves several partners, including Kent Wildlife Trust, Sussex WT, RSPB and the Forestry Commission. The work is sponsored through the Esmée Fairbairn Trust and involves research into how newly planted woodland can support wildlife and conservation (see separate article).

(ii) Wildflower Project. Sharon then explained an exciting longer term project which aims to enrich wildflower stock in our grassland areas. BWT has had to manage its site carefully from a state of dereliction in 2004, and it will take further time to develop and enrich our site to reach its full potential. There is a chance that BWT could be involved in future work with Kew Gardens and the National Seed Bank, an exciting prospect!



Visiting an autumnal BWT

AGM SPECIAL • AGM SPECIAL

FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Bernard Head's detailed accounts showed a surplus for the year of £19,000 with current reserves of £118,000.

Bernard said this healthy position was due to careful management and the substantial input from volunteers in routine maintenance and in projects. As mentioned, the Tractor Barn was completed at an incredibly low budget of £48,000, far less than originally anticipated due to the sterling efforts of the volunteer group.

Bernard also mentioned that Gift Aid had enabled tax recovery of £5,339 this year. This is a vital income and everyone is asked to sign the declaration to enable tax to be recovered. Seemingly small amounts have a significant contribution. Please don't forget to tick the box!

PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE

Dave Johnson highlighted the following achievements:

Work on Phase 2 of the Tractor Barn is now completed, largely by a small band of dedicated volunteers with help from specialist contractors. Through these combined efforts costs have been greatly reduced.

We are entering a slightly more relaxed phase of works with projects for winter-spring 2010/11 being fewer in number and smaller in scale. Likely work will include construction of a path to the Parish Council's Play Area, and improved drainage near the main entrance gate. There will also be replacement of dead trees and development of areas to be highlighted in the autumn inspection.

Maintenance in 2010 has been in line with the Environmental Management Plan. There are currently 16 volunteers in the teams working to an agreed rota.

If a regular commitment for volunteering is not possible, we will be running special 'one-off' projects which would greatly benefit from your time. Look out for notices to see what's coming up and when.

The season has been preceded by morning training sessions for each of the three teams in Health and Safety aspects of plant and equipment. Dave paid tribute to the willingness and dedication of the team members. New volunteers are always welcome, especially for one-off projects. Keep an eye open for flyers on when the work is being planned.

AGM SPECIAL • AGM SPECIAL

MEMBERSHIP

Chris Street's Membership Report showed that Current Family Memberships were up to 1073, with Life Memberships at 307 (including 40 in the past year).

The Barn Appeal had raised £22,398 in total, an amazing sum from a wide range of contributors. Chris paid tribute to her volunteer delivery team who save BWT about £1000 each year in postage. However, a significant element of the yearly budget is through membership subs. Please could members note that these were due on 1 July and we'd gratefully receive all those outstanding.

Chris Street also welcomes and thanks Dorothy Rhodes and Rosemary & Tony Blount for agreeing to join the delivery team.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Educational visits have been hosted for New Line Learning Centre (Age 15-16); Green Vale Infants (Chatham, age 6-7) and Thurnham Infants (age 6-7). The younger visitors are always enthusiastic and write lovely letters of appreciation. They love the open spaces and hearing about how tall the trees grow and the animals that live around the site. Dave was thanked for his commitment and leadership of the teams.

Dave's top questions
asked by the children:

How many trees are there?
Are there bears in the old wood?
Do you have a Gruffalo?

Dave Johnson and Thurnham CE Infants Yr2,
circle the President's Tree



AGM SPECIAL • AGM SPECIAL

TREE AND BENCH REPORT

David Ward thanked all sponsors, and commented on the feedback that he regularly receives describing the pleasure gained from the trees and benches dedicated to loved ones.

From September 2009 to August 2010 36 trees and 5 benches had been sponsored, bringing an income of £8200. There were also 15 new Life Members, generating £1500. There are 2 benches available for sponsorship in the Play Area. Also, there are 12 mixed trees available for general sponsorship. In the recent dry summer some trees had been lost and these would be replaced in the autumn.

Chris Street has also collated a full inventory and mapping of all sponsored trees and benches. If you'd like to find out where your place of interest is, please contact Chris on membership@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org or call on 01622 739713.

MOBILITY SCOOTER AVAILABLE FOR VISITORS

Now that the meeting and storage barn is complete we are able to offer our mobility scooter for use, as promised after winning the 'People's Millions' competition on Meridian Television in 2007 (see Issue 13).

It will initially be available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week between 09.00 and 12.00. There will be no charge for this facility but a small donation would be appreciated to help with the maintenance costs.

For use on BWT property ONLY.

Please book at least one day in advance and note that we will require one accompanying walker with the scooter user.

For further information contact us on 07807 917533



Peter proudly modelling the new mobility scooter!

ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

BY SHARON BAYNE

Bearsted Woodland Trust is involved in a two year project with the East Malling Research Institute, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and carried out by leading woodland ecologists. The project will provide woodland owners and managers, conservation organisations and local authorities in the South East with the knowledge to significantly improve the quality of new native woodland (woodland planted in the past 20 years or so) for wildlife.



Peoples Wood at BWT

A best practice booklet, endorsed and available through the Forestry Commission and workshops will help to change practices not just in the South East, but also further afield.

The new woodland planted at Bearsted Woodland Trust is one of five new native woods used as case studies. Wildlife surveys were carried out and advice on management given by ecologists. In November a group of BWT volunteers will attend a workshop to find out more about how to increase the wildlife value of our woodlands.

If you want to find out more about the project or any other conservation issues contact Sharon Bayne at conservation@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

NEW LOOK WEBSITE

Have you been online recently and seen the new additions to the BWT website?

There is now a very striking 'Souvenirs' page. This has been made possible by local artist Robert Ward, who grew up in Bearsted and has exhibited paintings in Whitstable and Rochester. Robert is a member of the BWT Friends, and has painted eight acrylic impressions of BWT views and arranged for two sizes of prints to be available for sale at very reasonable prices.



All proceeds to go to BWT. If you have a favourite view or place, Robert is also happy to paint commissions.

We also have an area for 'Supporters' which details information for working parties; delivery team; friends and grants; joining information and much more about just who it is who makes the real difference and why we're a flagship Woodland and Community Volunteering project.

You'll also find in 'Contacts' an updated list of email addresses to make reaching the right person for your message easier and quicker.

To see more, go to: www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

WALKING THROUGH

BY SANDRA KNATCHBULL

Those of us who visit Bearsted Woodland Trust on a daily basis are fortunate to be able to stop and talk to others walking round. This is not only on glorious sunny mornings, but also on the coldest and most miserable of days that the weather and season throws at us. New faces can always be seen, and it is interesting to learn where people have come from. Many are staying at the Tudor Park Hotel and don their running shoes for a quick circuit or two; others have noticed the footpath sign on the A20 and just cross the road to take a look. I have noticed that many walk along to the Trust from the Bearsted Caravan and Camping Club site over ½ mile from the A20 entrance. Quite a few have their dogs with them, but they are again drawn by the footpath sign, and have said that standing at the gate and looking over to the North Downs almost takes their breath away because it is all just tucked away in the trees and could easily be missed. One person who regularly walks through BWT is Bernard, who is 90 years old. I catch up with him most mornings (and find it hard to keep up with him!). He says that walking with people



Bernard on his daily walk.

around the paths makes his day. Whether it is early morning with all the runners or later in the afternoon, there is always someone walking through.

WHY WE LOVE OUR WOODLAND TRUST – YOUR STORIES

The editorial team hears so many varied and fascinating stories about users and experiences of BWT that we thought they deserved editorial space.

If you'd like to send us your anecdotes about how you love to use BWT or people you have met or just strange and amazing things you've seen – as long as it's publishable, we'd love to include it! Send emails to: editor@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org and letters to: 8 Fauchons Lane, Bearsted, Kent ME14 4AH.

We look forward to hearing from you.



THANKS GO TO THE BEARSTED VETINARY SURGERY

BWT has recently received a £300 cheque from Bearsted Veterinary Surgery, as their charity of choice.

In September, the Vets were allowed to donate a percentage of monies from the sales of animal medications to a charity. The Practice wanted the money to go to a good cause within the local community and knowing BWT hosts many dog walkers every day (we estimate around 100!) they very kindly selected us. In receipt were Deputy Chairman John Wale and Life President, Peter Willson. Presenting the cheque were Loree Luck, Veterinary Surgeon and Practice Owner, with several of her staff.



Photograph supplied by the Downsmail

For general enquiries to the BWT work parties on the move
and for use of the BWT Scooter please call: **07807 917533**

If leaving a message, please don't forget to include your name and number.

This mobile has been kindly donated by maintenance volunteer Kevin Reynolds, in memory of his uncle, Lionel Reynolds, who passed away earlier this year.

Lionel was a lover of wildlife and the countryside and his family felt the donation was something their uncle would have supported.

If you would like to receive your newsletters via email and NOT paper copy,
please contact Chris Street on membership@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

The Woodlander Issue 19 has been brought to you by the editorial team of Fiona Marriner, Sandra Knatchbull and John Wale.

Design by Paul J Street Printed by www.easyprintuk.com

Feedback and comments to: editor@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

**Bearsted
Woodland
Trust** 