

Annual Meeting 2019 – The Good News

44 people (Trustees, Management Committee, and Friends) attended the meeting on Sunday 29th September. Apologies were received from a further 24 Friends. John Wale and Sharon Bayne (Co-chairs) reported that this year had seen many positives:



The trees and hedgerows continue to mature and are, on the whole, very healthy. Careful preparation and maintenance is being repaid.

Moore Meadow plantings are also maturing, with distant views of Bearsted Village and the North Downs admired by Green Flag judges, who once again gave us a high score in the Green Flag Community Award category.

Some Sad News

We were sad to learn that Steve Andrews, who skilfully created our owls, green man and horse, died suddenly on 24th April at work, aged only 46 from a brain aneurism, leaving a widow and three children. A plaque in his memory has been placed in Riders Wood, and we shall think of Steve when we enjoy his work.

Several local premises, including the Bowls and Tennis Clubs, were burgled during June and July. BWT didn't escape! We lost most of our power tools and smaller equipment. Police visited the site, but none of the stolen equipment has since been located. We shall be increasing security as soon as possible.



Membership

Chris Street reported to the Annual Meeting that BWT had 1,186 family memberships, of which 46 were new. In a short discussion about the current fee level, the consensus was to keep Annual Membership at £5 (minimum).

Our stall at Bearsted Fayre, with a photograph record of our land, was as busy as ever. Three new members joined us, twelve Friends renewed annual memberships, and we sold a lot of souvenirs.



The Fitness Trail

Adrian Bouwens urged everyone to make good use of the 6 fitness stations. Thanks to sterling work by our Membership Secretary, eleven local businesses sponsored us to a total of £3,014.

- Bearsted & Thurnham Bowling Club
- Bearsted & Thurnham Club
- Bearsted & Thurnham Lawn Tennis Club
- Bearsted Dental Studio
- Bearsted Golf Club
- Bearsted Parish Council
- Brook Security Limited
- Landway Surfacing Limited
- Roseacre Raiders Football Club
- The Cavendish Coffee House & Eatery
- The Oak on The Green



Finance

In the audited accounts to June 2019, our Acting Hon. Treasurer reported an in-year surplus of £11,971, which included some generous fund-raising by a family who were tree sponsors. For 2019/20 the financial picture will change significantly because of additional expenditure on Tractor Barn security and the Fitness Trail. It was also noted that some fencing erected in 2008 is now in need of replacement, but BWT have planned for this.

The full Financial Report can be found on our website.



Wild Flowers for 2020

A 25 metre strip has been prepared near the Roller Bench to create a wild flower border, which will be sown with no less than 40 varieties of wild flowers. For the complete alphabetical list see our website, but it includes Birds-foot Trefoil, Night-flowering Catch Fly, Ragged Robin, Selfheal, Wild Mignonette, and the essential Yellow Rattle!

It doesn't look very interesting now, but this strip from a similar meadow will help us imagine how pretty it will be all next summer!



Trees and Benches

David Ward reported that two trees lost in Moore Meadow and one in Old Avenue were being replaced. The pause in tree sponsorship remains. Since there are now 64 benches around the site, no new ones will be sponsored now, but any that are deteriorating will be replaced.

There have been several educational visits and walks by local schools, and two talks given by John Wale to charitable organisations have generated donations.

The Co-chairs thanked the volunteers whose dedication and reliability helps to keep the site in good shape. Many compliments have been received from visitors

Weed Control

In general discussion, control of Ragwort was mentioned. After another dry summer, it has proliferated in verges and fields in the area, and despite several volunteer mornings, Moore Meadow needs further work. The Management Committee agreed to investigate all methods of control, including the possibility of root-pulling sessions (with special forks) involving help from Friends and local organisations.

Full AGM minutes are accessible on the BWT website.



Honorary posts which need filling

BWT is still looking for a permanent Hon. Treasurer.

Hon. Newsletter Editor Judy will be resigning after she has completed ten issues next year, and cannot resist finishing with a photo of her favourite spindle berries!

We are looking for a new editor (and maybe a fresh style) as soon as possible.



Editor: Judy Buckley Design: Paul J Street Printed by Reed Printers, Rochester

Up to date news and further information about Bearsted Woodland Trust can be found at www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

The website contact page is the easiest way to send us messages or to request this newsletter by email. We also welcome nature notes from BWT Friends.

BWT Telephone 07807 917533 Please leave your name, number and message, and we'll return your call.

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