

BWT “AWE INSPIRING”



BWT has again been awarded a top category Green Flag Award - with the visiting assessor describing the Trust's activities as “awe inspiring”.

The Green Flag Community Award, based on national standards, provides a benchmark of excellence for community-led park and other green space projects nationwide and beyond.

This is the twelfth year in a row that we have received an award in the highest category, a remarkable achievement.

All the work to develop BWT's green space ecology initiatives has been undertaken by the team of volunteers backed by Management Committee expertise and Trustee involvement.

We won praise for the site's biodiversity and conservation work, but BWT was also described as very welcoming with equal access for all and the availability of “a fantastic array of seating”.

“This is a huge community endeavour with 26 acres of woodland and meadow, with the intention to grow via bequests.

“The level of community endeavour of a site of this size is innovative in itself.” reads the report. “The involvement of so many professionals in their fields - from ecologists to tree experts and beekeepers - shows the Trust has a fantastic network.



“It is incredible that a quarter of all Bearsted households are members.

“For a community to run a site of this size to the level of quality seen on the visit is simply awe-inspiring.”

**BWT
OPENS NEW HOTEL**

see page 10



A Letter from The Chairman of Trustees

It is a pleasure to see that BWT is so well used and so much appreciated by many members of our community. The reason for its success is the dedication of a large number of volunteers who have over the years put so much into administration, membership, finance, strategy, countryside management, tree sponsorship, fund raising, publicity and site maintenance.

With so many willing volunteers it is unfair to pick out particular names, but special mention is deserved for Chris Street, Dave Ward and Jeff Winn who have been volunteering since the very early days and who all put in a great deal of time and effort.

A CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED

As Richard Ashness highlights in his message to members, some of our most active members have been volunteering for very many years and it is time to take some of the weight off their shoulders.

Maintenance volunteers are always welcome, but we are now also looking to fill three specific roles:

- **An archivist to maintain our extensive photographic archive to an appropriate technical standard**
- **A photographer to provide a record of our activities and landmark events**
- **Someone to assist with our tree sponsorship programme**

If you would like to know more please contact the BWT Management Committee via our website.

We are very grateful for the support of our membership base...you...the readers of the Woodlander. But it is quite surprising that many people who use the site are not aware that it is provided by community volunteers and assume that BWT is provided by 'them' or the local authority.

Our volunteers are planning to take a few initiatives to encourage more site users to become supporters, and we wonder if existing members could help by encouraging friends to join too.

It would be very rewarding for our volunteers if we could encourage more people to engage with BWT and become members/supporters.

Richard Ashness

THANK YOU Michael



Our search for a photographer follows Michael Buckley's decision to stand back.

He took many of the photographs published in past issues of The Woodlander and his work has formed the backbone of our extensive photographic archive.

His first, shown here, dates from 2005. (His most recent is the "team photo" at our recent volunteers event on page 7).

We would like to thank him for the important role he has played in recording BWT's development over the entirety of its lifetime.

TAKING SHAPE

Preparatory work for BWT's Jubilee Wood and car parking area began in February. Whilst the ground was still reasonably soft, volunteers were able to lay CellPave matting on top of the grass and press it in with the help of a heavy roller. The rolled-in CellPave mesh will provide a robust parking surface but allows the grass to grow through it, which maintains an appropriate rural feel.

Maintenance volunteers have also planted mixed hedging whips around the boundary and these are now in leaf. The landscaping will incorporate other features to encourage wild life such as log piles and dry hedging and long distance views will be preserved.

No opening date can be set for the car park until Maidstone Borough Council approve the construction management plan for widening our existing entrance off the A20.

A further 50 trees are on order to complete the 70 tree Jubilee Wood. They include various species of cherry, silver birch, rowan, crab apple and other native species. Our earlier plans for 70 cherry trees were abandoned because of the disease risk associated with single species planting. Each of the 70 trees will be available for sponsorship.

We intend to organise a Family Planting Day later this year to give local families another opportunity to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee.



A MYNN AWARD FOR JUDY



Former Website and Newsletter editor Judy Buckley is the latest volunteer to receive a Mynn Award from Bearsted Parish Council in recognition of her contribution to village life through her work with BWT.

She was nominated by BWT Management Committee Chairman John Wale who told the judging panel: "Having worked closely with the Bearsted Woodland Trust, Judy became both Website Editor and Newsletter Editor, receiving commendation from Green Flag Award judges who described it as "the best website we have seen for a charity".

"These communications are key elements to the public face of the Bearsted Woodland Trust and Judy's tireless contribution has been hugely important to the Trust and the local community".

NOW WE ARE SEVEN!

Judy is the seventh BWT volunteer to receive a Mynn Award.

The first came in 2007 when the late Peter Willson received one for leading the voting campaign which won top prize in the National Lottery Fund's Regional "People's Millions" competition.

The £80,000 award funded a project which included building a two metre wide path around the extended BWT site to provide "Access for All".

BEARSTED AND THURNHAM SOCIETY



When the Bearsted and Thurnham Society decided to buy a Commemorative Bench to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee they asked if they could site it on our land.

We have been happy to agree and it is being placed near to where we will be planting our own Jubilee Wood.

TREE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME RE-OPENS

A number of trees in Moore Meadow have now been released for sponsorship. They will first be offered to people on the waiting list.

There will also be opportunities to sponsor one of the 70 trees being planted in Jubilee Wood.

HOW TO APPLY

In order to sponsor a tree you must be a Life Member.

The cost of sponsoring a tree is £250.

This includes the cost of the tree and a plaque engraved with words chosen by the sponsor.

Initially, the tree and plaque will be maintained by the Trust for 20 years, including the cost of replacement of the tree or plaque if necessary. This period can be extended every 10 years at no further cost.

Contact Dave Ward through our website for full details.

TRUSTEE RETIRES

John Broadhurst says that when he first became a Trustee of the BWT the tree behind him was about the same height as him!

He stood down in June after holding the position since January 2005 - one of the original Board of Trustees when BWT was established - saying it is time for a younger member of the community to step in.

Those with long memories will know that John played an active part in the campaign to prevent development on the land at Church Landway on which BWT now sits.

Chairman of Trustees Richard Ashness said John Broadhurst's advice and support had been invaluable, while Management Committee Chairman John Wale spoke of his enthusiasm, energy and commitment, adding "John has always understood the background work which goes into the development and management of a Trust run entirely by volunteers".



John's place as a Trustee has been taken by Christian Esposito, who lives adjacent to BWT. He is in his 30s with a young family and will add a younger perspective to Trustee thinking.

STOCKING THE NURSERY

From time to time we are lucky to be able to take advantage of a free supply of native variety trees as one year old whips. These are funded by carbon offset where a company can offset their carbon emissions by planting trees. In this case BWT provides the land and the planting.

Part of the hedge along the Ashford Road, Rider's Wood and other trees in Moore Meadow have come from this source.

If we are lucky we have some left over and we pot these up in our R&D Department (our nursery behind the barn) and use

them to replace whips that have not taken and died or to fill gaps elsewhere.

This is an important source of trees for us as it supplements those which we have bought and allows us to participate in the national programme of tree planting.



NATURE NOTES

Whether Bearsted Woodland Trust is a place for you to take your dog for a walk, or a pleasant outing for the children or an opportunity for you to get out into the fresh air it is worth pausing just for a few moments to observe the environment and wildlife.

Wildlife comes in all shapes and sizes and is adapted to different environments and the more habitats that we can create and include the more wildlife we can attract. By helping wildlife we can keep natural systems that we rely on for survival, health and wellbeing.

So what are we doing?

A simple log pile can quickly become a flourishing wildlife community. Many invertebrates including ladybirds and spiders may overwinter in the drier logs and as the wood rots more quickly at the base it is providing more habitats for insects that help to decompose the organic material, so we have slugs and snails, springtails, woodlice, millipedes, worms and various beetles all munching away. These will attract hedgehogs, birds, frogs, and toads searching for prey.



Church Meadow was the first to benefit from our dead hedges which are also to be seen in Moore Meadow and the Car Park. These are made of woody prunings and sticks. They provide a wonderful habitat for lots of creatures such as longhorn beetles, wood wasps, voles and shrews.



Dead trees are full of life and a valuable habitat. Hundreds of insect species feed on dead wood as you see on the fallen oak with the owl carvings. Slowly but surely it is being eaten away.

Our **hedges** are a living boundary; they improve the environment, absorbing sound and pollution.

Mixed hedges, we try to use native species. They create food, shelter and nesting sites for birds, small mammals, caterpillars and other insects. They also serve as a wildlife corridor linking lots of habitats.

Butterflies benefit from the shelter of a hedge and you may spot bats at dusk swooping along hedge boundaries as hedges provide food and act as a navigational aid.

Our mowing regime of having staggered and programmed mowing allows for plants to grow and provide food for insects. The mix of perennial plants in a meadow offer food, shelter and reproduction opportunities for wildlife year upon year. Watch for butterflies basking in the sun and drinking nectar from the flowers and the marmalade hoverfly with its distinctive black and orange bands gathering pollen from blooms.

A HELPING HAND

You will also notice our work to help nature out. Bat boxes will encourage bats to set up home in Moore Meadow, stag beetle towers provide habitat not only for these magnificent predators but other insects. Our bee hotels provide a safe haven not just for bees but a diverse range of insects and arachnids.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

The last Woodlander featured items on gatherings held by our Maintenance Volunteers and Newsletter Delivery Team.

This summer we went one better - bringing both groups together for the first time ever, to meet and talk with each other about their roles and their attachment to BWT.

Around 40 volunteers came along, some of whom have been supporting BWT since the Trust was created 18 years ago. As well as laying on refreshments the Management Committee set up a stall showcasing our new merchandise (see page 8).

Perhaps unsurprisingly we found quite a few buyers!

The Maintenance Volunteers work in teams three mornings a week. They have varied backgrounds, including engineering (even our tractor maintenance is carried out in-house) and thanks to their expertise the bills for external help are very low.

Meanwhile, hand-delivering the newsletter across Bearsted saves about £700 a year in potential postage costs.



SPREADING THE WORD

Both the Bearsted Market on the Green and Bearsted and Thurnham Fayre returned this year after the disruption of the pandemic - and BWT was back too.

Management Committee members were on hand to showcase our history as a local independent charity and to encourage people to support the voluntary effort which protects, manages and maintains our 26 acres of woodland and open space.



NEW IN '22 - Price List

We were also there to raise money - and at the Fayre we unveiled our latest fund raising venture, **Calendars and Christmas Cards**.

We have also produced new **Note cards**.

2023 Calendar £5 including cardboard envelope

Christmas cards (pack of 5 of a single design) £3.50

"Snow blankets the Old Avenue"

"Frosted berries in the People's Wood"

Note cards (pack of 5 assorted) £3.50

Other merchandise includes:

Cotton bags £4

Notelets (pack of 6) £3.50

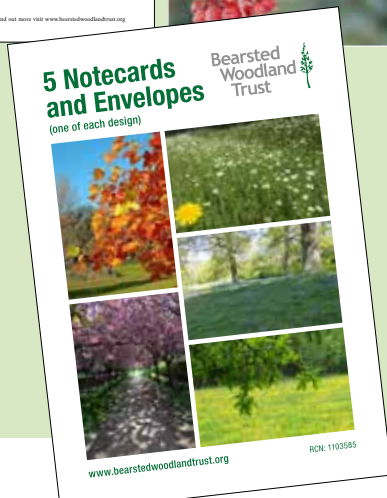
Paintings and prints by Robert Ward from £5

Wooden bowls by Rod Litherland £15-£40

Bird Box kits £5

You can order now by emailing membership@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org
We will deliver free of charge within Bearsted.

These items will be on sale at our AGM on October 9 and at our stall at Bearsted Market on the Green on November 6. They are also being sold through Taylors newsagents.



MANNING MAZE GETS A MAKEOVER

Over the winter our maintenance volunteers were hard at work resurfacing the Manning Maze, always a popular feature with our enthusiastic younger visitors (and some older ones).

For a long time the maintenance of the Maze has been a problem, with weeds growing through the surface and the grass encroaching from the sides.

We considered putting in edging strips, but the various materials we looked at were deemed unsuitable and the cost was also very high.

Eventually we re-cut the edges and scraped the surface, and the whole maze was re-surfaced using a self-binding grave. This appears to have been successful.



A LIVELY VISIT

Ninety Year 2 children from Thurnham Infants School visited BWT as part of their Science and Nature studies.

They came in three Class Groups, along with Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Parent Helpers.

This was the first outside trip by a Year Group since Lockdowns. They were very excited and lively (and so were we!)

Our volunteers explained the history of BWT, the landscape and wild life and why trees are important (many already knew about photosynthesis and $\text{CO}_2 > \text{O}_2$ and the need to plant more trees!)

We showed them the old ragstone quarry, rocks as old as dinosaurs. They liked the log piles, dry hedges and tree carvings. We showed them the prepared wildflower

areas and explained why these were important.

The children stopped for an apple and drink break, and all litter was taken carefully off site!

All in all, a very rewarding morning.



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR NEW BEE AND BEE HOTEL?

It was a hive of activity in the barn earlier this year as we made the first of our beetiquehotels which is now on the bank in Church Meadow. Unfortunately, the drones have been too lazy to fill the rooms and we are asking for young workers to help us furnish the B&B so that it is fit for a queen.

Please encourage your children to either bring furniture from home or scour around BWT to find some suitable bedding. Hollow tubes, fir cones, bundles of twigs, crushed brick, dry leaves, terracotta pieces and other debris all make for a comfortable stay.

So get buzzy and let's make this the bee's knees.



OUR GUESTS

Although quickly dubbed "a beetique hotel offering bee and bee throughout BeeWT" the building will not be used for overnight or week long stays.

Instead, it provides long term nesting accommodation where a Solitary bee lives from the time it is laid as an egg until it is ready to emerge as a fully grown adult.

When we think of bees in the UK we tend to think of the Social Honeybee and of Bumblebees but in fact they only account for 10% of the UK's 275 bee species and Solitary Bees form an integral part of pollination networks.

These wooden structures provide a safe haven for them and also for other insects and arachnids.

BWT AGM 2022

The Bearsted Woodland Trust AGM will be held at Bearsted and Thurnham Bowls Club in Church Landway on the afternoon of **Sunday October 9th**.

Start time 2.30. Doors open 2.00.

It would be helpful if Members would let the Management Committee know in advance if there are any specific ideas or questions you would like discussed so we can make sure they are on the agenda.

You can do this by email via the website contacts page.

However, if you do not have internet access, leave a message on **01622 737705** and someone will call you back.

RICHARD WILDING

Richard Wilding featured in the last Woodlander as one of the longest serving members of the Delivery Team. He and his wife Gwen started volunteering when BWT was founded back in 2005.

Following his death in February the family asked for donations to BWT for a project in his memory.

As a result we were able to press ahead with erecting a fine Bird Hide tucked away in a quiet corner of the Roller Bench Wood. It is already proving extremely popular and Coolings Garden centre have donated bird feeders and a continuous supply of birdseed.

Such has been the generosity shown to us by Richard's family and friends that we have also been able to fund new wildflower areas and other projects.



ROD LITHERLAND

Bearsted woodturner Rod Litherland was one of BWT's earliest volunteers and gave many years service to the Trust, especially as a reliable stalwart of the Woodlander Delivery Team.



In 2016 he made a platter from wood from the fallen Turkey Oak which was raffled at the Bearsted and Thurnham Fayre, raising £145 for BWT funds.

When he died earlier this year he left us a collection of his other work to sell. Two bowls have since been bought by the winners of the original raffle!

Rod's wife Quita told us "It makes me happy to know that folk are prepared to pay for something that Rod made with love and which helps the Trust in a small way. Particularly good to hear that the couple who won his platter think enough of his work to come and buy more."

WHAT3WORDS

All our noticeboards have been updated to provide location information for users of the what3words app.

Every three metre square of the world has been given a unique combination of three words - so you always know exactly where you are and, should you need assistance, people can find you.

MONEY MATTERS

MEMBERSHIP RATES

BWT is not immune from the recent rapid increase in fuel, maintenance and material costs and we have been forced to review our membership rates for the first time in our 18 year history. During that time the price of wood products has increased by 170% and the cost of other materials has doubled. Our fuel costs have shot up 66% in the past six months alone.

We are now asking new members for a suggested annual donation of at least £10. Existing members are being asked to consider increasing their own annual contribution to the same figure.

Following an email to Members explaining the increases a number have already amended their standing orders - and no fewer than four have changed to life membership, which is now £150, including a long standing supporter in her 80s!

ONLINE BANKING

We would like to thank our friends who use online banking to pay their membership direct to our account, rather than by cheque or cash. This saves us a lot of admin time and effort.

PAY BY CARD

Also, to help with the sale of our new seasonal calendars and Christmas cards and make it easier for new members to sign up at events like Bearsted Fayre, BWT now has a card reader which can accept Contactless and Chip & Pin payments (debit / credit cards) or by using Apple Pay / Google Pay on your smartphone.

WEBSITE NEWS

Our website has continued to provide online visitors with information on Bearsted Woodland Trust's popular features and activities over the past year.

The site now gets around 1,500 visitors per month, with each person viewing an average of 2.3 pages per visit.

Those figures are consistent with those recorded during 2021. During the first national Covid lockdown in 2020 the website attracted a record 2,000 visitors during the months of May, June and July.

Prior to that, the website had around 1,000 visitors per month.

BWT Web Editor Martin Herrema said: 'It is clear that our web site continues to provide essential information, both for those planning a first visit to Bearsted Woodland Trust and for our many longstanding members and friends.'

BEQUESTS TO BWT

In this issue we have been able to report two generous bequests to BWT: but sadly, and not for the first time, another substantial donation had to be declined.

Although clearly intended for us, the Will in question referred to the Woodland Trust, which is an entirely different organisation.

If you are considering remembering us in your Will please ensure that it refers to us as **Bearsted Woodland Trust (Charity Number 1103585)**

Bearsted Woodland Trust

Registered Charity No: 1103585

Editor Barbara Long, Designer Sue Fuller, articles and photos by Management Committee Members and supporters. Printed by Reed Printers, Rochester.

Up to date news and further information can be found at www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

Contact Us: 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.

Telephone: 07807 917533 Please leave your name, number and message, and we'll return your call.
Postal address: Bearsted Woodland Trust, 8 Fauchons Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 4AH.