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The monthly bulletin from the Perivale Wood and the Selborne Society - Pioneers in Conservation -



Welcome to the Selborne Society Bulletin for September 2013

We've news of the next month's programme, progress with the new building, and Situations Vacant - as well as an update on the Westonbirt outing in October.

What's on

- 7 Sep (Saturday) **Field Meeting at the Reserve... Ferns 2.00 pm** ... Laura Belton will lead us on a new topic at the Reserve, exploring our damper places and finding out what we've got, and where. Be prepared to go to some surprising places in the Reserve.
- 8 Sep (Sunday) **Conservation Management at the Reserve. 10.00 am**
- 14 Sep (Saturday) **Junior Section, 2.00 pm at the Reserve** : Apples, sloes, blackberries – learn to make jam from them!
- 1 Oct (Tuesday) **Evening meeting: 7.45pm Greenford Community Centre. "Swifts"**

Edward Mayar of the Swift Conservation Trust will tell us about these amazing birds, which are with us just three months each Summer, bringing vital drama and excitement to our streets and skies. Swifts have shared our buildings ever since the Romans came to Britain. They still breed in our eaves and gables, but not for much longer, as modern and renovated buildings exclude them, unless we do something about it, Swifts will vanish from the UK. Find out about Swifts, why they matter, and how you can help them thrive.

- 5 Oct (Saturday) **Field Meeting 2.00 pm at the Reserve Fungi, Aleck Henricki – our annual foray.**
- 12 Oct (Saturday) **Junior Section, 2.00 pm at the Reserve** Toadstools, mushrooms, and all sorts of fungi – find the biggest!
- 13 Oct (Sunday) **Conservation Management at the Reserve. 10.00 am**

New Building ... an update

The greatest news is that the new planning application has been submitted; this is for the Straw Bale Building designed by Strawworks. We had a couple of tweaks to the original proposals, but now have what ought to be a beautiful, functional building.

The Planning Application was submitted on the 1st August, in time for the Anniversary of withdrawing the previous application - we had hoped to avoid paying another fee – hurrah; the deadline that imposed was quite useful too as it gave us something to work to. But, alas Ealing Council have ruled that the application is not a resubmission but a new application, so are not accepting the application until

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The plans etc. will appear on the Ealing Website quite soon (might take a few days for them to filter through) but you can view them [here](#).... there are a number of files hopefully the names are fairly self explanatory – the “elevationsgreen” is for the building if we have a biodiverse roof (soil and plants growing on it) – this is the best job that we’d really like but is likely to be a bit expensive SO the alternative is “elevationsshingles” which show the building with cedar shingles on it (like tiles but cut from cedar rather than slate, concrete or clay) – these would still meet our sustainable objectives but be very much cheaper, as they are lighter than several tons of topsoil on top of the roof, so the roof structure can be much less expensive.

We needed a “Soil Survey” to ensure that the preferred foundations – car tyres with hardcore rammed into them – are viable, and after a few enquiries and discovering that a professional one would cost about £1600, a post hole auger was used to bore a hole 800 mm deep, and the soil examined and photographed This gave sufficient information to be sure that the site is on clay, so 1 m deep foundations ought to be sufficient, and car tyres ought to do the job. this is great as though unorthodox, they are again sustainable; finding a second use for old car tyres (worn out ones will do just fine) and free of concrete etc.,

And money, of course is important ... it all needs to be paid for. We've put in a grant application with Veolia Environmental Trust, for £50,000, – ambitious, but within their parameters, and we stand a reasonable chance of success. Coupled with the money that we ought to have, the project would be more or less paid for – but additional funds would enable us to do a better job (the biodiverse roof, for instance, rather than the cheaper shingle roof) and fit the building out really well. We may put in for funding from other grant organisations, and donations and fund raising initiatives from Members will be gratefully received.

So, what next ... it will take the Council till about October to give us Planning Consent (or refuse it) – during that time we can major on other grant funding, getting materials in, and other preparations ... there will be lots to do. One job will be to reduce some willows at the Reserve Entrance, install a steel storage cabinet, and transfer the contents of the Garage to the new cabinet; the cabinet will become our new tool store, and form a wall for our new cycle racks. The garage will become part of the foundations!

We intend to use as much recycled stuff as possible, consistent with a fantastic, wonderful, and inspiring building The Rickyard, the building that we hoped to relocate, was been finally handed over for demolition, and we were given permission to remove anything that could be salvaged and of use to us in the new building - so a team was working – and salvaged about £4,000 worth of usable materials – windows, doors and frames, electrical bits, including heaters, water heater, lights, cable, conduit, trunking, consumer unit, the beautiful, pine, tongued and grooved cladding, some Dexion shelving, and laminate flooring. Oh, and there's an Oak Bench, commemorative of the coronation of the Queen, that's been a bit broken, unused, and unloved, and in storage for quite a while, and that has been donated to the Society too – now housed at the Reserve. repaired, and scheduled for a good clean and treatment with Danish Oil.

Thanks to the “Raiding Party” – John Sears, for setting it up and coordinating it; Viv. Cane Honeysett, John Morrell, Alex Nieora, Ed. Pawley, Andy Pedley, Peter Warne, & Richard Pedley for driving the incredibly battered White Van that we hired for the day. You can see pictures and further update [here](#)

The materials that we've got stored are in various locations, and thanks to the Elders of Holy Trinity Church, Perivale for allowing us to use a shed at the back for storage. Holy Trinity have also kindly given us 40 stacking chairs, that we've used to replace the hotchpotch of old chairs in the old hut; the “new” ones (actually probably 40 years old) all match, are in good condition, and will serve us well in the new building. Other stuff has been donated; kitchen units from a flat in Central London, and white boards for educational use. It will all come in useful! Of course this is all to fulfill our “Pioneers in Conservation” tag line, the “Waste Heirarchy” of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. We are open to other offers of good quality pre-loved furniture, but are now very short on storage space, and do want to be selective to ensure that we get furniture that does the new building proud.

We are also looking at fundraising generally and sponsorship, and if you know of any Companies who would like to be associated with this scheme do please put them in touch.

Westonbirt Coach Outing - 16th October

The good news is that the 53 seater is now fully booked, the bad news, of course is that there are no more places so if you have not booked and wanted to come, sorry. We often have a few drop outs at the last minute so create a Reserve List (already two on that!), so apply if you want to come, but no promises!

Jams and Fruit and open day

One of the joys of Open Day has been our jams - hundreds of jars lovingly made by Rae from whatever fruit came to hand and recycled jars. Rae handed over the ladle to Clare Vernon last year, and Clare has put out a plea for fruit is available (except apples!) to be provided, otherwise there will be small stocks next open day. offers to contact@selbornesociety.org.uk asap - the fruit can be frozen to keep it fresh until delivered.

Membership

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At its last meeting, the Selborne Council agreed to increase membership fees from £4 for a single person, £6 for two at the same address, and £1.00 for each junior member, to become £10, £15, and £3 respectively. That comes into effect from the 1st September, and a new membership form will be available with those prices on it. Those who pay by Standing Order will get a new mandate form to complete and return - and of course payment by Standing Order is encouraged so if you want to pay that way, let us know.

Situations Vacant

we are still looking for a Minute Secretary, to take notes of meetings & turn them into neat typewritten notes - involves 4, or maybe 5 evening meetings per year, which are either held in Perivale or Greenford. If you could fill this (voluntary) roll do please get in touch.

We could also do with some help administering membership; for many years Rae has administered this on a card index system, with a computer database to handle the mailing list. Rae is happy to continue, but it would be good to have someone shadowing her and updating the computer.

Refreshments are organised after field meetings (1st Saturday of each month); it would be great to have a rota operating so there's always arrangements for buying supplies, making the tea etc, and clearing up.

If you are interested in helping with any of these please email contact@selbornesociety.org.uk.

Warren Farm

Warren Farm is located on Windmill Lane, Norwood Green, just south of Three Bridges - Nic. Ferriday - our Reserve Management Officer - writes:

You may have heard of the plan by Ealing Council to give away Warren Farm (mostly green open space) to a private company, Queens Park Rangers football club, to build a corporate headquarters and a private training facility. See letter below from the Brent River & Canal Society to Ealing councillors for more information. See also the Save Warren Farm web site <http://www.savewarrenfarm.com/>

You may like to write to your local councillor objecting to the lease.

Nic

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Dear Councillor

You may have been following the current controversy concerning Ealing Council's intention to lease the large area of playing fields off Windmill Lane, known as Warren Farm, to a professional football club, Queens Park Rangers (QPR) for a corporate headquarters and private training ground.

Ealing council is planning to sign the lease shortly. We explain below why this is a shocking deal and why we are asking you to intervene.

Warren Farm is protected Metropolitan Open Land (the city's equivalent of Green Belt), designated as Community Open Space, and has been used by the people of Ealing as outdoor sports space for close to 90 years. It is also part of the Brent River Park (BRP), although the council has been quietly trying to take Warren Farm out of the BRP in the current Local Development Framework process. There is free public access to the land.

The sports pitches are well drained and in good condition. They are the best in Ealing and no fixtures have had to be cancelled due to waterlogging in the last ten years.

The changing rooms have become virtually derelict and there is no doubt that they need replacing. However, we believe it would be possible to raise the money to provide a 21st Century Sports Pavilion with state-of-the-art changing rooms from sports grants bodies such as Sport England and the Olympic Legacy Fund (and many others). Ealing Council has already done this for Pitshanger Park (Scotch Common) and Lord Halsbury Playing Fields in Northolt.

Despite this, Ealing Council is going ahead with leasing all 61 acres of Warren Farm to QPR for 200 years at a peppercorn rent. In effect, giving it away. Two thirds of the land will be for the private use of QPR. Only a third of the space would be left for community use and even for this, public access and use of it would be controlled by QPR.

Community sport facilities would be reduced. Football pitches will be reduced from 16 including adult size to 11 half and three quarter size pitches. Six cricket wickets will be decreased to three, overlapping the football pitches. Community athletics field event facilities, community outdoor netball/tennis/basketball courts and model aircraft flying will be lost. School and community sporting events will not be possible.

We are told there will be an investment of £8M to include a community sports pavilion and some undefined sports activities. However, the only pressing identified need is changing rooms and these would not cost more than £3 million.

Councillors have been shown a ludicrously low valuation for Warren Farm of £1.8 to £2.25 million. But this is only relevant for sports grounds with no development

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company facilities would be industrial/commercial which has a value of about £350,000 per acre. The total value, taking 2/3 of the 61 acres, is then £34.6m.)

The upshot is that Ealing council is giving QPR land worth £35m in exchange for new changing rooms worth not more than £3m (plus £5m for some unspecified use). Ealing council are, in effect writing a fat cheque for a large private company (which happens to be bankrolled by some of the richest people in the world.)

To make the situation even worse, a large part of the existing outdoor community facilities and public access will be taken away.

This must surely be worst ever deal for Ealing's residents and taxpayers!

We urge councillors to step in now and prevent this disastrous deal from taking place.

Wildlife Gardening Forum Conference: October 21st

I am writing to invite you to the next conference of the Wildlife Gardening Forum, on 21st October 2013 at the Clinical Sciences Building at Coventry University Hospital. I hope you already have the date pencilled in your diaries.

I have attached a provisional programme. Minor changes of title or order may happen, but the basic programme is assured.

This is a mould-breaking meeting for two reasons. It will be the first Conference we have held outside London or the home counties. Coventry has excellent rail connections from all directions so should be an easy venue. Secondly, this is the first Conference we have held on the interactions between biodiversity, wildlife gardening and people's health and well-being. We have a very strong group of speakers who will give an excellent introduction to an increasingly important subject - and potential opportunity for the Forum.

Coventry University Hospital is one of the pioneers in making therapeutic use of its grounds within the NHS Forest initiative, and we will have a guided visit to the project in the afternoon, prior to a discussion on what we feel our goals should be for linking wildlife gardening and human well-being.

Finally, we will have a brief Annual General Meeting, for which this email is a formal notification. Papers will be sent nearer the time.

The fee for the conference is £30, which includes a good (vegetarian friendly) lunch and refreshments through the day. Any surplus will go to build the Forum's (small) reserves.

contact wlgf@stephenhead.com for the programme and to book

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