

The Yateley Society

Newsletter

Issue 106 February 2012

www.yateleysociety.org.uk

Everyone is cordially invited to attend

Chairman's Annual Dinner

At

The Tally Ho!

Reading Road, Eversley

On

Friday 24 February 2012

7pm for 7.30pm

3 course menu inc coffee

£20

*Please let me know if you would like
to attend
email*

contact@yateleysociety.org.uk

or telephone me on

01252 879103

Roger Coombes

By the time you are reading this we will be in February, but within the Society we are still at the end of the "old year". The "new year" begins after the AGM on 16th February. We have just held the penultimate meeting of the year in January, at which we made a last minute change of programme to enable members to hear the rationale behind the Executive's comment to Rush Films' application to use part of Blackbushe airfield for filming, and to debate the issue. This was the best attended meeting of the year so far and a lively debate ensued, with views expressed by those on both sides of the case. In a vote taken at the end a sizeable majority of those present approved the Executive's stance and endorsed it being continued.

It is good to have members' participation and I want to heartily encourage you to come to the AGM, more information about which comes with this newsletter. This is your annual opportunity to have your say, not least by electing the Executive Committee and Trustees for next year. All 10 members of the current Committee are willing to continue, but assuming they are all re-elected there would still be room for two more, so please consider standing.

Finally, please take the time to read the Annual Report, which comes with this newsletter.



Roger Coombes
Chair

Welcome Back to the Pond Dipping Platform!

A new 'T' shaped dipping platform has been installed on Stroud Pond thanks to a Big Lottery 'Awards for All' grant secured by The Yateley Society.

Following the removal of an old pond dipping platform when it became unsafe, the Yateley Society successfully secured a grant from Awards for All to help build a new pond dipping platform on Stroud Pond. The pond is used throughout the year by school groups learning about pond life and this new platform will help children get a better and safer experience, whilst also helping to protect the banks of the pond.

The platform was installed by Volunteers from the local community and Yateley Society along with Hampshire County Council's Countryside Rangers during November, and was constructed out of Millboard Recycled plastic. This material was chosen because it will be long lasting and will not cause chemicals to be leached into the water as can happen with timber.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the funding application and installation of the platform!

Jean Cheadle—Yateley Ranger

Before and after !





Planning Seminar Collaboration a Success!

A presentation by Tony Burton of Civic Voice to the Farnborough Society in April was the catalyst for three local civic societies to join forces to hold a series of three seminars for members of the public interested in knowing more about the planning process and how to best engage in the public participation increasingly encouraged by legislation.

The seminars were the brainchild of the Yateley Society due to concerns over the need to engage more people in planning policy and development control issues. It was felt that there were citizens who were reluctant to become involved in planning issues because they lacked experience and/or knowledge. The idea became a reality when informal discussions took place with Farnborough and Fleet & Church Crookham societies at the Civic Voice event. Planning throughout the summer months culminated in the staging of three seminars. Roger Durdle, Secretary of the Yateley Society, said "We could not have put these events on without the invaluable input from our neighbouring societies and this coming together to share ideas and resources was really beneficial and laid the foundations for future co-operations."

These seminars, held in November, covered the fundamentals

of planning, heritage & conservation, and practical advice on challenging planning proposals.

On the first evening Jane Terry and Nicolette Pike from the respected local planning consultancy Bell Cornwell explained the fundamentals of the planning system.

On the second evening David Brock from English Heritage in Guildford explained how 'heritage assets' are protected and how local people can participate. He was followed by Dr Graham Rood, the Secretary of Farnborough Air Sciences Trust, who explained how this has achieved the preservation of Farnborough's unique aeronautical heritage.

On the third evening Phill Gower, Co-chairman of Fleet & Church Crookham Society and local County Councillor David Simpson talked about how local groups like civic societies, can participate effectively, and how best to communicate with elected representatives and council officers about planning issues.

Co-chairman of the Fleet & Church Crookham Society Gillian Wain, said, "The decisions made about planning & development affect communities for decades if not centuries. There are so many changes afoot, with the new Localism Act and the Government's draft National Planning Policy Framework. This was an opportunity for people to find out more about the planning process and how they can influence the decisions made."

The seminars were well attended by over 40 people. Chairman of the Yateley Society, Roger Coombes, said, "The seminars have been a great success and we have received many comments of appreciation and requests to follow up with further seminars next year". Secretary of the Farnborough Society, Barbara Hurst, added, "Attendees filled in feedback forms and we received many comments saying that the seminars had 'demystified' the topic and given them a good understanding of planning policy & legislation and the changes taking place."

Clarks Farm latest

On January 11, the Ashill plans, as discussed with the community, were thrown into doubt by a report by Planning Officials with regard to its viability to comply with the Hart planning policy of 40% of the development being for affordable housing.

The proposed scheme included 70 dwellings which originally included an affordable housing ratio of 30% with the addition of a £200,000 contribution for off site leisure activities. Following discussions with officials this was modified to include a 33% ratio of affordable houses but no contribution to off site leisure.

The only option to gain more affordable dwellings is to re-plan with a more densely developed site. A scheme with 100 houses would be the viable option to attain 40% affordable housing ratio and this will be put to Full Council for a change to the Local Plan. However, just as we go to Press, an application has been made for 85 houses, 31 of which would be affordable. Watch this space!

Fleet Pond Nature Reserve

Our November Meeting was hosted by Fleet Pond Society Chair, Colin Gray.

Fleet Pond is Hampshire's largest inland freshwater lake, and was constructed by damming some of the natural watercourses draining a wide area of heath and woodland. By the 12th century it was a thriving fishery managed by monks for the Winchester Diocese and continued as such until the 15th century.

When the railway was built, the local station, Fleet Pond Halt, was a popular destination for Londoners who came to enjoy the fishing, and in the winter, skating and ice hockey.

The Army moved into the area for training purposes in 1854, and de Havilland later used the pond for testing early float planes for R.A.E. When the Army moved away from the pond area the undergrowth got out of control, and in 1976 the Fleet Pond Society was formed to try to improve it. They now manage the site with the owner, Hart District Council. Their first task was to construct a circular route round the pond with a path and two bridges. Conservation work began in 1982/3 and now the whole area is a Nature Reserve, most of which is a designated Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), applying to the wetlands, the pond and the dry heath. These areas provide a rich and diverse habitat for animal and plant life, with over 2,000 species living in or visiting the reserve.

In 2003 the Society received the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Award for voluntary services by groups in the community. The Reserve has a fenced off area for grazing (by 3 bulls) which also provides sanctuary for wild life, free from humans and dogs. Recently the society has received a grant from English Nature and Natural England so that heavy machinery can be brought in to control the tree invasion of the wet heath.

The Fleet Pond Society has now launched the 'Clearwater Campaign' to collect money to tackle silt build up and for the restoration of the pond (the work is thought to cost in the order of £500,000), so that the Fleet Pond Nature Reserve can be kept in the best possible condition for the future.

I have walked round this area many times, it is well worth maintaining, and I wish them well in their campaign.

Mary Hocking

www.fleetpond.fccs.org.uk

Filming on Yateley Common?

The following Press Release was sent regarding the Rush Films application to film on Yateley Common:

"The Yateley Society is sympathetic to Rush Films' proposal to construct a temporary film set at Blackbushe, but we cannot see how this can be done legally and lawfully within the filming schedule set out in their planning application to Hart District Council. Blackbushe is part of Yateley Common which has layer upon layer of environmental protections. At a public meeting called by Rush Films, Peter Tipton outlined six permissions required if set construction and filming were to take place. In fact there are seven! We are surprised the location team hadn't been advised how long it would take and trustee Philip Todd said "If only they had started months ago we could have helped them through each step of the various processes". Despite the attractions of filming locally several trustees endorsed County Councillor Adrian Collett's remarks that we must do everything possible to make sure the Special Protection Area (SPA) for Wild Birds is protected, by adherence to the procedures set out in the European Directives. Failure to do so could result in other, less desirable permissions being granted in future. "

The Society must continue to support the decisions made by Natural England as the "competent national authority", but we don't know how they will handle Harts decision to grant permission.

The Yateley Society Annual General Meeting

Will be held at

The Tythings

On

Thursday 16 February 2012

at 8pm

*Come and join us for wine, nibbles
and some interesting discussion!*

In 1985 BCA was granted planning permission for the auction site only on the condition that 138 acres of registered common land, including the proposed filming site, would be transferred to a public trust. BCA and the County Council have been wrangling over the terms of the trust for 25 years and in the meantime, the area has been given the status of "Unfavourable-declining"! It would have been better if a procedure could have been set up to secure permissions to film outside the nesting season—the area could certainly do with the income to fund the public trust to bring the SPA up from its present status of "Unfavourable-declining" to become at least as good as those parts of Yateley Common well managed by the Rangers and Hampshire Wildlife Trust.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Thursday 16 February 2012	Our AGM! Not as "dry" as it sounds. We will debate some local issues and try to come up with a united front. To help us, there will be a glass of wine and nibbles on hand!
Thursday 17 March 2012	John Walker of Civic Voice—one year on and what has the movement managed to achieve in this era of the "Big Society"?
Wednesday 21 March 2012	Living with Environmental Change -A CPRE organised talk by the Earl of Selborne at Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Tickets £15 and this includes canapés & a drink
Wednesday 25 April 2012 11am-3.30pm	CPRE Combined trip to Hill Farm Juice & Hill Place in Swanmore. The tour will start at Hill Farm Juices an award winning Hampshire company. A tour of the farm and working practises will finish with a tasting session. There will then be a tour of the Hill Place, a Georgian country villa, which featured on the Channel 4 programme 'Country House Rescue'. £5 for members & £7 non-members

*Our monthly meetings take place at The Tythings, Reading Road Yateley at 8pm unless otherwise stated.
Members and non-members welcome, admission free.*

The Conservation Group normally meets at Wyndhams Pool, Cricket Hill at

10.00 am on the last Sunday of every month.

Everyone is welcome to join in the fun. The aim is to help the Yateley Rangers in all sorts of tasks in the upkeep of Yateley Common. To find out more, please call Mike Mann on 01252 877741

We would like to remind all members, who have not already done so, to renew their membership as soon as possible at the new rates:

Individual membership £10
Household (2+ adults) £15

Membership renewal forms can be downloaded from our website www.yateleysociety.org.uk/membership/

Standing Orders—Would all those members who pay by standing order please ensure that their bank have instructions to pay the new amount as several have already gone through at last year's rate.

Thank you! - Roger Durdle

Dear Editor

It was very gratifying to read in the November issue that the Royal Oak Valley has achieved SINC status, as the Yateley Society has carried out many jobs there over the years. Tim Ackroyd, the Hart Ranger, was very enthusiastic about the Royal Oak Valley and encouraged the Yateley Society efforts to reduce Himalayan Balsam, while he organised a programme of meadow-mowing and other improvements to the Valley.

Unfortunately for us Tim's value was also much appreciated by Hart, who moved him on to bigger and better tasks.

All is not lost however, as one of Tim's helpers, Duke Banfield, is now a Hart Ranger with the Royal Oak Valley under his wing, and he too is keen to make the most of the site.

Tony Hocking

Welcome to our New Members

A warm welcome to our new members who have joined since publication of the last newsletter:

Caroline Sellick, David Hearn, Abbey Boles, Mark Roper