THE NEWBURY & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

NADAS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2022

NADAS - Registered Charity (1003898) aiming to promote and enhance agriculture, horticulture, forestry, rural crafts and skills and to the benefit of the countryside and the general public.

It's often said that no two harvests are the same and this year there was certainly no shortage of sunshine! For many harvest has now been and gone and the focal point will be autumn planting and the strong desire for some rain to help.

As mentioned in our June newsletter our application to modify the S106 Agreement that we have with West Berks, has been submitted. Currently we are severely restricted on the use we can make of the site in the winter months. We have asked that this restriction is lifted and have requested that we have a more flexible list of permitted activities. We have emphasised that we are not asking for additional days over and above that which we are already permitted to do.

We would encourage Members and local communities to please send in your support.

Planning Documents can be viewed on www.westberks.gov.uk under *Find a Planning Application*. where you can search using Postcode RG18 9QZ

DIARY DATES:

The Annual General Meeting: 28th September at 7pm in the Society Building, followed by a BBQ.

Ploughing Match Saturday 17th September

Finances remain stable:

Following on from a good surplus in the year to 31st December the current year is forecast to make a small surplus. Lettings continue to improve, but we have not yet managed to replace the income from the Covid Centre. Bank loans currently stand at £302,000 and net cash at bank amounts to £304,000, which will be partially eroded as we enter the closed letting season.

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Members' events:

In June a group of 25 members met at East Farm, Winterbourne Monkton for a farm walk and an insight into breeding goats for meat. Laura Corbett, the third generation of her family to run the farm, welcomed everyone and gave a detailed account of how the farm had evolved since 1948.

The farm, on the edge of the Marlborough Downs, is in a high level stewardship scheme and is primarily arable and grassland on the steeper parts. They have a herd of White Park cattle (one of the oldest breeds in the country) with which they provide beef for the farm shop and also a herd of 300 Boer goats. These are the only breed of goat specifically bred for meat, they are learning about them all the time and have adapted their breeding cycle to help make husbandry easier, to give the kids the best start. The meat is sold through the farm shop, at markets and at shows in the area. The trip was a fascinating insight into a different and important type of farming.

Education:

It has been wonderful to run the Potato Challenge for Schools in its entirety this year after two years of disruption. This fantastic project educates children about where their food comes from, many never get to handle raw potatoes as so often families purchase them already processed from supermarkets.

March saw local Primary Schools attend the showground to plant three seed potatoes each of two varieties, Rocket and Jazzy, into grow bags, to take back and tend to at school.

June saw the schools return to the showground to harvest with the children. I wish I could have bottled the excitement as the bags were turned out to reveal what had been happening buried away in the compost!

Hampstead Norreys Primary School grew the heaviest yield of Rocket, weighing in at 589g and Robert Sandilands Primary grew the most of Jazzy at 694g. On returning to school, Hampstead Norreys Primary used their potatoes to assist in a maths lesson. I am delighted to report that the schools are all keen to participate next year and I have already had interest from new schools.

Aston Martin visit to the Showground:

Constructed in 1922, the TT1 car, later named Green Pea was Aston Martin's first Grand Prix entry. Now in its 100th year, Green Pea has been busy, with appearances at Goodwood Festival of Speed, a centenary event in Strasbourg and then the 2022 French Grand Prix, being featured by Sky Sports and Aston Martin Formula One, with Sebastian Vettel behind the wheel, running him on synthetic fuel.

Green Pea, now owned by the Murray family, prepares for another chapter in his history as the third generation of the family takes the wheel for the Precostt Hill Climb. Jake (17) and the Murray family are grateful to The Trustees for allowing them the use of the Showground for Jake to learn to drive the Aston in preparation.

Showground Events:

Since June, we have had seven more events on the showground including The Berkshire Balloon Fiesta, The Retro festival, Stance Fever Car Show and The Labyrinth Challenge.

Coming up we have the Klasyczna Polonia UK Car Show, The 4X4 Spares Day and The Showman's Show. All events can be found on the website.

The Showground:

At the beginning of the year we set out maintenance schedules to help gain a clearer idea of what was needed to be done to improve the current infrastructure on the showground. As previously mentioned the 'Society Building' has been upgraded to help make it more user friendly for events. Since then we have repaired and replaced where necessary the drainage by the 'Building Society building', cut grass, cleared weeds and sprayed. We are currently in the process of drawing up a more focused plan to get a better understanding of which remaining areas we need to improve