



Smokebox

Summer Special 2020

Beds Area Group

Welcome to this Summer Special Smokebox

I have good news and bad news!

First the good news, we can begin using the Eaton Bray Hall for our monthly meeting again commencing from the 6th September. As you would expect the Hall Trustees have had to make some changes to ensure the Hall can be used safely by us and their other users, more of this later.

The bad news is we have cancelled this years Steam in Beds, with normally over 200 visitors there is no way we could manage any form of social distancing assuming we got any visitors. There is no guarantee that any traders would agree to come, I understand a number have already pulled out of the Peterborough Show.

Returning to the subject of our monthly meetings, I have been advised by the Trustees we will have to finish 30 minutes earlier at 3:30pm, this is to give them time to deep clean the hall before the next user at 4:00pm. To keep the length of our meeting we will be able to start 10:00am. The other restrictions that will be in place are as follows:

- We must enter by the front door and exit via the fire door adjacent to the kitchen.
- Only one toilet will be available, that being the Disabled Toilet adjacent to the kitchen. The Gents and Ladies at the front of the Hall will be shut.
- Finally, the kitchen cannot be used for food preparation, we will however have access to water. This is a potential problem as we can't all use the same kettle; I suggest you arrange to bring your own drinks either hot in a thermos or cans of drink. We can provide disposable cups so avoiding the need to use the groups own mugs. We also need to think about how we manage the day for erecting and running on Ridgmont. Clearly things will have to be managed differently. The committee have discussed this at some length and come up with what we think is a way of managing the building and running on Ridgmont. Attached is a copy which you should read, if you have any concerns please let me know.

I need to know if you are willing to attend the group running session under the conditions laid out in the attached document. Clearly if enough members say they will attend we will go ahead with the 6th September date. However, if most members say they will not attend there will be little point in continuing with the programme of dates.

If I do not hear from you, I will assume you will not be attending so please let me know if you will be attending.

Group Meeting Dates – 2020

Below are the remaining dates for 2020, our new start and end times are as follows 10:00 am to 3:30 pm.

6th September 4th October 1st November

As we have cancelled SIB for this year, we are considering holding a meeting in early December or if all else fails we could look at holding an extended running day on the 28th November instead of SIB.

I would welcome your views.

As we will be limiting our meetings to just one layout in operation in the Hall at any one time, I have been in touch with Carol East regarding Prayle Grove. Carol has advised me that as she and Graham are shielding, they are not planning to be at any meetings this year.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

In the March Smokebox I reported that Tony will step down as our Treasurer

Tony McManus has advised me he will step down as the Groups Treasurer at the end of August which is our year end. This is a vital time of the year for the Group with our Subscriptions due and Steam in Beds. Even though Steam in Beds has been cancelled for this year, the Treasurer still has an important role to play. Naturally, this is a big blow to the Group, he will be sorely missed, Tony has been Treasurer since the creation of the Beds Group over 30 years ago. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience about the Group and its history, I believe Tony intends to remain a member of the Group.

Having said that it goes without saying we urgently need to find Tony’s replacement as soon as possible so there is time to do a proper orderly handover. If you are interested in taking on this role and remember you do not need to be an Accountant, if you can manage your own finances then you should be able to manage ours. Please let me know if you are interested.

One final word, without overstating the case, the role of Treasurer is vital to the continued existence of the Group. Without somebody managing our finances the Group cannot function and prosper.

There would be no meetings in 2021 and no Steam in Beds 2021.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Chris