

NOTES FROM ROBIN COATES (WHERSTEAD) RE MEETING AT JIMMY'S FARM

Brief notes from the meeting follow:

The evening was well attended with the restaurant full (maybe 100 people!).

Lots of background with details of all the organisations that the Wildlife Park is a member of or has been accredited by, plus details of the awards they have won.

They are obviously very successful and Steve (Park director) holds senior positions within a number of these organisations and has been involved in drafting Zoo standards. (EAZA, BIAZA, WAZA, EEP, ESB, KSTR...)

They were very keen to ensure we understood that they do not pay for the animals as they are either rescued or moved around zoos as part of breeding / conservation programs.

The farm is very active in conservation and is part of the Nature Safe, a cryo-preservation organisation.

The Park will become the global centre for Bears in December this year.

£8,000 pounds has been raised by the Park for the Suffolk Horse society

They have started working with Tattingstone School and are trying to get it to be the first conservation school in the UK.

The Polar Bears are doing well, with Ewa is showing signs of her stress levels reducing (High from her previous zoo.) The Cub is still weaning, but Jimmys are considering moving it to a new zoo under one of the programs.

They emphasised the effort that was put in to try and save Hope, the bear that died recently.

Series 2 of the Big Bear rescue is being filmed at the Park now.

Planning for the Brown Bear enclosure has finally just been granted and the application for the Polar bears should be signed off once they have some information to confirm if they eat grass snakes. Both these applications were retrospective.

They briefly described the security, with people living on site and fire arms training.

91% of all the staff live within 20 miles and most are very local

The Park spends 2.8 million on wages each year and this is 28% of their costs.

They employ 147 people today and this rises to around 200 in peak season

The following information was given out as being in confidence

They are creating a new crocodile enclosure and two American Alligators will be coming to the Park, they are rescue from Heathrow.

A new Ant eater will be arriving to keep the existing one company and possible become a breeding pair.

They have still not got agreement to take Pannington Hall on and restore it, although Lottery funding has been applied for.

Two elderly lions will be arriving in approx. 2 weeks plus one Tiger. These animals will be replaced when they die. They will occupy the new enclosure being constructed now.

The lion enclosure is 7,500 sq. m and the Tigre 6,000 sq. m

Retrospective planning applications will be submitted for both these enclosures.

The enclosure application will contain tented accommodation for visitors.

The Park expects the big cats to attract 1,500 extra visitors per year, approx. 250 people per day. Current visitor numbers are 300,000 per year.

Questions were raised about the traffic and infrastructure. Highways have been out last week and the farm said they were happy with the current situation.