

Come along to

**Tarvin Community Woodland Trust's
Spring Fundraising Event!**

PLANT SALE

and Raffle

with Chapel Cake Stall and Bacon Butties

at Tarvin Methodist Church

between 10.00am and Noon

on Saturday 13th May 2017.

An excellent selection of shrubs, perennials, annuals, vegetable plants, tubs and hanging baskets all at very competitive prices.

The Trustees will also be on hand to talk about the work we are undertaking in the woodland and will be able to further explain anything which is still unclear after reading this leaflet!



www.tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Email to: info@tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Tarvin (01829) 740337

“Crowsfoot Cottage,”

Old Moss,

Stapleford,

Tarvin,

Chester.

CH3 8HR

April 2017

Dear friends,

Our Community Woodland is well used and appreciated both by Tarvin residents and by our neighbouring communities. Our long stated aim of managing the existing woodland for sustainability at affordable cost has been achieved in recent years but our ambition is taking us further:-

- In April we will take ownership of the “new woodland” within the Saxon Heath development.
- Our weekly volunteer workforce on Thursday mornings now regularly numbers 5 or 8.
- In recent weeks the new weekend volunteers have contributed much to the new woodland area especially in terms of thinning new tree growth and hedge creation through transplantation.
- Never has any woodland boasted so many habitat piles!

Thanks to the generosity of our Community (in many, different ways) and the maintenance funding attached to the new woodland adoption arrangement with Taylor Wimpey, we have finally been able to purchase a substantial ride-on mower capable of dealing with brambles and longer growth. Our indomitable grass mower is appreciative, given the much larger area to mow! We are also working on establishing a safe storage area for the mowers and other kit in the Woodland.

Our cooperation with Taylor Wimpey has been mutually very successful. Other organisations are studying/planning further housing developments in Tarvin and can see the potential benefits of working with TCWT. However, this gives the Trustees food for thought. A common cause of organisational failure is overstretch and this we must avoid so we must consider further woodland expansion very carefully and will strive to do what is best for both TCWT and the Community. Certainly, for the next year or two, we must concentrate on the consolidation of the existing and new woodlands and integration of the work of the volunteers to continue our strategy of sustainability at minimum cost.

In addition to Woodland development, we have always been committed to being part of the social fabric of our Community through our support for the school, the apple pressing days, access to nature through bird boxes, hides and wildlife habitats! We envisage these activities not just continuing but growing. An example is our involvement with Brio to support the McMillan Trust in using our woodland for guided walks to help and encourage the recuperation of cancer patients and others.

Please do not hesitate to talk to us with your ideas and constructive criticisms. The next opportunity is at the plant sale on 13th May at the Methodist Church - details on page 4. Please come and support our efforts by purchasing plants and please think about making tax-effective donations, however small. Also please consider joining our volunteers on an ad-hoc basis, even if a regular commitment is not possible. We have several events in the course of the year.

With best wishes and thanks for your support.

S.F. Exell

Stuart Exell

Chairman of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd.

News from the Woodland.

Woodland Volunteers.

It is generally agreed that our woodland is in fine form and is a wonderful community asset. We might be expected to say that – but Green Flag inspectors (who are the arbiters of quality for public open spaces) have agreed with us, awarding the woodland seven (7) consecutive Green Flags. This comes about because of the efforts of a huge number of people. Most obvious of these are our team of volunteers, who work throughout the year (usually on Thursday mornings) and deal with all the maintenance and upkeep in a grand fashion. Grass is cut, paths are cleared and edged, trees are trimmed, bird boxes are maintained, fences are repaired, hedges are cut and a raft of other jobs tackled. Alongside this go the folk who do the bird feeding and regularly check the woodland for safety problems. Then there are the unsung heroes (and heroines) amongst the many woodland users, who pick up the faeces from their dogs and collect the occasional pieces of rubbish and litter left by less-thoughtful folk. To all of these people go the grateful thanks of the Tarvin community. Our woodland is your triumph. Thank you.

The Thursday group of volunteers are usually retired people – employed folk will be busy elsewhere on Thursday mornings! Recently, though, a second group has begun work – this time a group of weekend volunteers. Comprising both employed and retired folk, they have been busy in the Saxon Heath part of the woodland on Saturday mornings. They have been removing those hedging whips that had been planted too close to the “specimen” or “standard” trees. Leaving them would have damaged the larger tree by providing far too much competition and so they have been moved to form the start of a hedge alongside the fence at the boundary of Fairfax Avenue. The enthusiasm and effort shown by our ‘weekend’ volunteers was truly amazing and watching the hedge develop along Fairfax Avenue was marvellous to behold. It is clear that the Trust has acquired a really valuable resource and, by operating groups of volunteers also at weekends, we hope to involve a wider selection of local people in caring for our woodland, thereby making its future more secure. If you would like to join with either of these groups, you will be most welcome.

Our “Special Award for Innovation”.

In addition to the main Green flag scheme, the organisers offer a Special Award for Innovation. These are much harder to obtain – while 1,700 Green Flags were awarded across the UK during 2016, only 15 Special Awards were made - **AND TARVIN COMMUNITY WOODLAND WON ONE OF THEM!** This is the second one of these that we’ve achieved. Jim Grogan was instrumental in receiving the first one, which was in recognition of the work done to obtain the initial gardening licence from the Highways Agency and then the awarding of a lease by the Local Authority. The second has recognised our success in the continuing pursuit of Jim’s vision through the Saxon Heath woodland. Having worked with Taylor Wimpey and the Local Authority planners to provide the new strip of woodland, the land is subsequently being gifted to the Trust. *“Judges gave the Award for preserving a green space for the community into the future, with both pieces of land now owned on behalf of the community”.* What a wonderful tribute to Jim’s vision!

Woodland Birdlife.

In the UK, the British Trust for Ornithology regularly surveys the bird population and publishes its results in a format based on conservation concern. These groupings are familiarly known as the Red, Amber and Green Lists, which are based on the most up-to-date evidence available. Red listed species are those of greatest concern. In the last listing update (2015) more birds with woodland habitats appeared on the Red list than those of any other habitat.

Our woodland is important as a sanctuary for wildlife and it is a part of the Trustees work to ensure that it is developed and managed sympathetically. Doing so depends on knowing which species are present already and a start has been made in surveying the birds that live in or use our woodland. Two of the Trustees, Robin Jones and David Thorp, have an interest in ornithology and have undertaken to conduct a monthly species survey of birds either resident in or visiting our woodland.

Each of the 12 planned surveys will involve a walk-through identifying species in or around the woodland by sight and by sound. Remember that in woodland where sightings are often difficult, particularly when there are leaves on the trees, identifying birds from their songs and calls is an important skill. Although species numbers will vary seasonally, it is expected our woodland, the surrounding residential areas and the school playing field should be capable of supporting at least 30 different species for most of the year. The surveys for February (23 species) and March (24 species) have already revealed the presence of five of the red listed birds. These are Redwing, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Starling and House Sparrow.

Once the survey is complete and the data assessed, the Trustees will be better placed to develop plans to make our woodland even more bird friendly. A key to this will not only be the knowledge of the species present but, just as importantly, those that are missing through, perhaps, habitat inadequacies. For those who are interested, copies of the species surveys can be obtained from the Trust Secretary (Phone 01829 741172).

Caring for the woodland.

The woodland is owned by the Trust on behalf of the community and so it belongs to all of us. It therefore falls to all of us to take care of it – and that includes passing comment when we see something being done which is clearly wrong. Earlier this year, two young trees in the Saxon Heath section had their bark removed. One had the bark removed in a complete circle around the trunk, meaning that that tree will certainly die. It was the sort of action that is likely to have been done by children – and they may not have realised the consequences of their actions. A passing adult might have prevented the damage with a well-aimed comment. In such circumstances, please do say something. It is not just the Trustees and volunteers who have the right to do so – our beautiful woodland is in the care of us all. *“It takes a village to raise a child”* - and a woodland, too!