

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 12th May 2018.

**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!

***It is YOUR Woodland! Come along
and help to support our efforts.***



www.tarvincommunitywoodland.org

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April 2018

Dear friends,

As we leave winter behind and look forward to a dry, warm spring and summer (we hope!), here is the latest newsletter from Tarvin Woodland Trust (TCWT) which manages and develops your community woodland on your behalf. This edition is particularly comprehensive and I encourage you to spend a little time reading and digesting it. We hope it may stimulate more ideas from you to guide our development but also encourage more community involvement (that is you!) in what we do.

In recent years we have placed major emphasis on looking after and planting trees and also expanding and diversifying the woodland. Looking forward we plan a more diverse approach, with some Trustees already leading moves to concentrate more on nature in the round: as well as botany we will increasingly concentrate on bird and animal life. This will require investment of both effort and money but, when successful, will more than pay off in the longer term for all of our users, including for the school age children whom we welcome into the woodland in our shared projects with Tarvin Primary School. Also, please consider the following observation and request. We are grateful to our volunteers and trustees for their support. However, they won't mind me saying they are in the main grizzly, funny males of a certain age. Long may they stay and continue! However, it would be good for us all to display diversity - in all its senses. So please consider how you, your family and your friends could become more involved with us. It **IS** a community woodland! Finally, one of our major annual fund raising events, the Plant Sale, will take place on **12 May** this year, as advertised in the newsletter. Please support us by donating plants for the sale and, especially, by attending the event and purchasing our plants.

Several trustees and volunteers will be present on the day, so please talk to us concerning any aspect that occurs to you about the woodland.

S.F. Exell

Stuart Exell

Chairman of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd.

News from the Woodland.

Our woodland birds.

During 2017, two Trustees have been undertaking a survey of the birds which can be found in our woodland. This was done in order to facilitate the woodland's long-term management by helping us to plan changes to the habitat, promoting under-storey growth and planting more 'berried' trees to attract new species. Altogether, there were 41 different species that used the woodland, while it is home to 19 of the species. The woodland is clearly serving as a valuable haven for birds in our area, although other surveys elsewhere have suggested that far more species could be encouraged to be present. Indeed, it appears that there are areas of Birkenhead which have a greater number of resident bird species!

As a result of the survey, we have already made moves to increase the diversity of feeding opportunities by planting more crab apples, guelder rose, mountain ash, larches and hornbeam trees. At the same time, we have begun the long task of "re-wilding" an area of woodland of about 2,300m² near Townfield Lane. The process will involve encouraging low-growing shrubs and brambles, which will provide both food and protection for birds, and providing a fence to protect the birds from the unwanted attention of people and over-enthusiastic dogs. It is a long-term project and we'll keep you updated on our progress.

The new public footpath.

The pathway which exists through the woodland, now christened "Grogan's Walk", has been a public footpath for years, but only because the original woodland Trustees asked that it should become one – it was not so originally. We consider that all members of the community should have the right to walk through their woodland whenever they wish to do so. Similarly, the pathway through the 'new' Saxon Heath woodland was originally not a public footpath when handed over to us. However, we have negotiated with the Rights of Way Department that the status of the path should change, so that we now have a public footpath running all the way through the woodland from Austins Hill to Townfield Lane. It is our ambition that the path should ultimately reach Holme Street at the roundabout, forming the basis of a circular walk of Tarvin village.

Acknowledging our progress.

Very soon after the Highways Agency awarded the Parish Council a 'Gardening Licence', Jim Grogan and his volunteers began in setting out the woodland that we now know. It did not take long for the merit in what was being achieved to be recognised and, in the Year 2000, at the turn of the Millennium, Tarvin Community Woodland was awarded the Countryside and Wildlife Award. Three fine oak signs were presented and installed and there they have remained for nearly 18 years. Weather and decay took their toll, until they reached a point at which they were all-but unsalvageable. In stepped Derek Rawden, who has recently restored the three signs, to the point where they are possibly better than when they were first awarded. It is a marvellous thing when such talented craftsmen are prepared to put in time and effort in the service of their community. Thank you, Derek.

Making a walk more interesting.

One of the things of which we are constantly reminded is that there is so much that we don't know. Another thing is that it's such good fun to find things out! It was with this in mind that Trustees decided that we ought to provide people with more information about the animals and plants that populate our woodland. Last summer, we introduced a number of green A4-sized information boards. These are intended to tell people about the trees, flowers, birds or animals which are in evidence at the time. Being small, they are easily moved, so that, after a few weeks, the same board can be used in a different place, giving information about something different. Comments last year were very favourable and we intend to extend the range of content, a bit at a time.

This year, we have prepared a dozen 'tree identification' posts and these will be placed permanently next to a good example of each type of tree. Our hope is that, gradually, people will come to recognise the trees by the shape of the leaves or the form of the fruits and will not need the help of the posts!

The story of our woodland.

It was pointed out to us that many of the folk who use the woodland, day in and day out, have no idea how it came to be there – of the struggles, hard work and sheer determination that brought it about. Indeed, some people do not know the significance of the footpath being called Grogan's Walk. We realised that we needed a couple of signs that can tell the woodland's story and give an idea of where we plan for it to go. Our problem was that such signs are costly and we were very pleased to receive a substantial donation towards their cost of production from the George Heath Foundation. They are now on display at the Broomheath Lane and Hockenhull Lane gateways. Do have a look at them when you're out for a walk.

How can we afford to run the woodland?

Without receiving a great deal of help, the truth is – we can't! We are given some money – the Parish Council generously give us £1,000 each year, which pays for our insurance and some fuel for the mower. Some Tarvin villagers are very generous. We also receive grants - this year from the George Heath Foundation and our Councillors – for particular projects. However, most of our money comes from our own fundraising, and the most important part of this is our Plant Sale on **Saturday 12th May**. It is vital that this is a success – and for it to be a success, **WE NEED YOUR HELP, PLEASE.**

How could you help? Perhaps you could come and buy plants, and persuade your friends and neighbours to do the same? But there is another way for anyone with a garden to help us. While you are gardening, could you pot up a few of your surplus seedlings or save and pot one or two bits of your herbaceous plants as you split them, so that you can then pass them to us for sale on that morning? We need to have lots of plants to sell if we are to raise a lot of money. Please help us if you can!

Our new chipper.

Keeping a woodland 'in order' becomes more difficult as the trees get larger and more plentiful. There are times when trees and bushes need cutting back – or even removing – and this results in a considerable quantity of wood. Larger pieces are not a problem, since they can be cut up and then used as firewood, but there are inevitably large quantities of smaller branches and twigs (referred to as brash) that have to be disposed of somehow. Because the woodland borders the A51, bonfires are not an answer – we cannot risk the chance of smoke causing an accident. Therefore we must either leave them to decay slowly or make use of a chipper.

Hiring a chipper is costly, which is why we are so grateful to our two Councillors - John Leather and Hugo Deynem – for providing the money to purchase a 13 HP petrol driven chipper for use in the woodland. Gradually the piles of brash are being chopped up and the resulting chippings can be used to surface the 'exploring' paths cut through the undergrowth.

The Saxon Heath woodland.

This is still very new and, whatever we do, we cannot make the trees grow any faster! However, we are replacing the trees that were poorly planted and have died, we have introduced a few others that will produce berries or fruit that will help birds, we have been working to move some of the whips so that, when they grow, they will form a screening hedge alongside the post-and-rail fencing, the wild flowers that grew from seeds already in the ground are being encouraged and some areas of the grass (particularly alongside paths) are being kept short. As trees grow, the vegetation beneath them will change and the 'mature' woodland will have a very different appearance. The work that is going on now is to ensure that we get the end result right!

Woodland maintenance.

This is the appropriate point to pay tribute to the work of the teams of volunteers who, week in and week out, put in the work that is needed to keep the woodland looking well and, perhaps more importantly, being a good place to live for the creatures that consider it their home. Last year, the time invested by the volunteers amounted to 1,435 hours – which, at national minimum wage, would be worth well over £10,000. Thank you, volunteers! This is an amazing commitment to our village's woodland and is a measure of the regard in which it is held. If you would like to join with us, you would be most welcome. Just have a word with one of the Trustees.