

Come along to
**Tarvin Community Woodland Trust's
Spring Fundraising Event!**

PLANT SALE

and Raffle

with Chapel Coffee Morning and Bacon Baps

at Tarvin Methodist Church

between 10.00am and Noon

on Saturday 11th May 2019.

**An excellent selection of shrubs, perennials,
annuals, vegetable plants, tubs and hanging
baskets all at very attractive 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 2019

Dear friends,

As Easter weekend approaches we are taking a break from our labours in the woodland for a couple of weeks, leaving nature to itself, especially the nesting birds. As it gets warmer; this is a good time to reflect on what we have achieved in recent months and to continue to develop our project plans for the future. A woodland develops slowly and steadily - but much progress has been made. This has been a very good year for flora in our woodland. After years of snow-drop splitting, the carpets of white have been rewarding and this year we split even more, including many in the wilding area. The white snowdrops are often mixed with yellow celandine, to be followed by wood anemones, bluebells and cowslips. A proportion of the “blue” bells vary in shade with several being white and pink. This is due to hybridisation with Spanish cultured bluebells in surrounding gardens and reminds us of the need to separate species: please avoid leaving garden waste in the woodland. Also, have you spotted the purple flowered snake’s head fritillaries close to the overhead electric lines? The sequence of tree blossom has again been rewarding this year - from blackthorn to damson to hawthorn – watch out Japan! The apple trees in our developing orchard are beginning to blossom, so we expect a good fruit crop in the autumn, at around the time of our apple pressing. Thanks to our birders we have a good understanding of our resident and visitor bird species. Yesterday, I shared with two newcomers to the area the noisy pair of jays that are regularly to be seen close behind the school and, in the same area, heard and saw a pretty mistle thrush, which has been with us for several years.

Finally, I draw your attention to the annual plant sale on **11th May** in the **Chapel** (see this newsletter) which is one of our major fund-raisers. It has become a major village event, so please come along and meet us. You can donate plants for sale but please especially attend the event and purchase our healthy and great value plants! We look forward to seeing you there.

S.F. Exell

Stuart Exell

Chairman of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd.

News from the Woodland.

The wilding project.

After nearly a year of planning and working on the 'wilding' area, the overall effect is more of an "un-doing" than a "creating". The need for the area stems from the lack of any undisturbed part of our woodland – the severe disturbance to shy animals & birds resulting from the presence of people and, mostly, of dogs. Thus, the first necessity was to fence off the area of approximately 2,400m² in which we would work and, in this, we must express our grateful thanks to the George Heath Foundation, which part-funded the purchase of the chestnut paling fencing on two sides of the area and the sheep netting attached to the already-existing post & rail fencing along the 'bridleway'. In parallel with the installation of the fencing, many of the sickly and overcrowded trees have been removed from within the area, in order to enable bright daylight to reach the ground for the first time in many years. Our next move will be to monitor the area as it grows during the spring and summer to come. There are already a lot of plants there that will help us to set up a strong, shrubby understorey and a dense and diverse 'field' layer of low-growing plants. Additionally, we want to retain as many of the original trees which still have a chance of becoming healthy specimens as we can. 2019 will be a year for the 'wilding' group to get to know the area really well, so that, in the autumn, we can begin to plant the new recruits – initially, the plan will be to plant a zone of about 3 metres (10') around the fences with a relatively dense pattern of shrubby plants, including hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, holly and elder. As these establish, they will form a dense thicket around the area and will provide the protection which will be required by the creatures which we hope will live in that area.

In parallel with this, we will begin to plan the centre of the 'wild' area. This will be less dense and, indeed, will incorporate a quite open 'glade' at its centre, within which we plan to include the spectacular drift of snowdrops which we have all enjoyed over the past month or so. The planting for this area will be quite different and much more open, so that birds and small creatures are able to

and establish itself, so as to create a better noise barrier. As the trees and shrubs get bigger, there will be more work that needs doing there. In the meanwhile, enjoy watching the gradual changes as what used to be a field becomes a small piece of Cheshire woodland.

How many trees make an orchard?

Within the woodland, there are various apple, crab apple and pear trees which have "appeared" over the years, possibly having germinated from seeds or cores left by passing creatures or people. However, they are randomly distributed and could in no way be considered to make up an orchard. What is an orchard anyway? The answer to this question varies, depending where you look for information and then whom you choose to believe. The answer that we've chosen to believe is, "*Six (or more) fruit trees grown together (in proximity) with the purpose of producing crops of fruit.*" In the area of the woodland behind Crossfields that is used for our apple pressing, we now have growing nine 'Cheshire' apple trees (given to us by Cheshire Landscape Trust), an 'Isaac Newton' apple tree (which has been cloned from the original 'Flower of Kent' tree under which Newton sat when working out his theory of gravity), two pear trees, four damson trees and several crab apple trees. This collection is more than enough trees to qualify as an orchard by anyone's definition! Therefore, Trustees have decided that, in future, that area behind Crossfields where the fruit trees are growing will be known as "**The Orchard**", **Tarvin Community Woodland**. It is in the orchard that we will hold the annual **Tarvin Apple Pressing** – this year on **Saturday 5th October**. We can look forward to another great family day that doesn't break the bank. What's not to like about that? It is worth mentioning that, because we are a community woodland, this will also be a **community orchard**. Once the trees are of sufficient size to be producing good crops, then we will invite folk to help themselves to the fruit – provided that they do not take it all and will leave fruit for others to enjoy as well. What could be better than munching on a freshly picked apple as you stroll through our woodland in the autumn sunshine? Now, there's something we can all look forward to!!

which Jim Grogan 'salvaged' from Delamere Forest, and continued with the installation of the two information boards, which again the George Heath Foundation helped us to finance.

Next, we began to use two types of small information board. The simpler ones are just posts placed close to trees of particular types, with the aim of enabling folk to identify the type of tree at which they are looking, and these remain in the same place, year in and year out. The other ones are posts with a frame for an A4 piece of paper on top. These can be moved around, so that information about trees, flowers, animals and birds can be given at a time when the things being described can actually be seen. Thus far, we have for these latter boards about four dozen information sheets, dealing with all manner of things which the Trustees think might be interesting to everyone else.

We have now reached a point where we think that it would be a good idea to ask others what it is they might be interested to know about our woodland and all of the life-forms that inhabit it. Therefore, we are requesting your help, please. Please tell us what things about our woodland you (and others) would really like to know about! If there is anything about our woodland that you think deserves a mention (or an explanation), would you please let one of the Trustees know? The plant sale on Saturday 12th May would be the ideal opportunity.

Saxon Heath notice board.

At long last the woodland bounding the new Taylor Wimpey estate is due to have its notice board fitted. We are very fortunate that we have been able to commission a bespoke, craftsman-made board which will be similar to the boards at Broomheath Lane and Hockenhull Lane. At the time of writing, we are uncertain when it will be ready but we hope that it will be installed by mid-summer.

Saxon Heath woodland.

It must be noticeable that, while the older bits of the woodland receive attention most weeks, there is seldom anything being done to the newest part of our woodland. The truth is that the Saxon Heath is not being neglected, it is simply being allowed time to grow

move around. However, we will try to ensure that, wherever possible, we use the plants which might be expected to grow naturally in this area, so that the end result will be, as close as we can contrive it to be, a natural Cheshire woodland.

Working with Tarvin School.

For some time now, the Trustees have been involved with the staff of Tarvin Primary School to make use of the woodland in order to track the changes undergone by living things as the seasons change throughout the year. The present arrangement is that year 1 pupils go out into the woodland, accompanied by their teachers and some of the Trustees in order to look at the way that the woodland plants (particularly the trees) and the animals respond to the season and the weather it brings with it.

The outings have proved very popular and we have found the youngsters to be very knowledgeable about nature and the responses living things make to the changes that occur throughout the seasons. We have now completed three of this year's walks, with only summer remaining – and that will be done in July (when we hope to have some good weather!). How marvellous it is that Tarvin School is able to make such good use of the woodland that exists right on its doorstep – and that the children so much enjoy going out to walk through it (whatever the weather might be!)

Information in the woodland.

Everything about our woodland happens slowly. For the first ten or so years of its existence, the overwhelming need was to turn abandoned fields into a woodland for the villagers to use. The fact that it was there was enough. Gradually, though, the Trustees have been able to think more about helping people to get greater enjoyment out of their visit to the woodland. Among other things, a reliably smooth and dry path has been installed, interesting side pathways through undergrowth have been created, bird hides have been put up and a bird feeding station is regularly maintained. Alongside all of this, we have wanted to help people to gain greater enjoyment from their walk by enabling them to understand rather more of what is being done and what it is that they are seeing. This was begun with the original notice boards