



www.tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Email to: info@tarvincommunitywoodland.org

“Crowsfoot Cottage,”

Old Moss,

Stapleford

Autumn 2017

Dear Friends,

Tarvin Community Woodland Trust (TCWT), as custodian of the woodland on behalf of our community, has had a very busy year maintaining and developing the woodland. For example, you may have seen on one of your visits our new “yellow peril” sit in mower capable of dealing with brambles, bracken and big weeds such as hog weed, as well as regular grass cutting. This and its storage container form our biggest investment to date but have greatly increased our efficiency. If only we could find a tool to help with path edging which is very manpower intensive, some would say back breaking! We continue our established relationship with the School and recently presented this year’s Jim Grogan Award to the pupil judged to have made the best progress in natural history. Our wider community involvement also continues apace as shown in the attached newsletter. Whilst our current funding is relatively healthy, partly of course thanks to your generous support at our events, and is probably adequate for our foreseen needs in the coming year, we do plan further fund raising initiatives as we are very reliant on the annual plant sale which itself depends heavily on the work of two enthusiastic members who grow and provide the plants every year. It is pleasing that the sale has become a major social event in the centre of the village and a big opportunity for communication between TCWT and the community, so we will be doing our best to continue it, possibly at a reduced scale. In the coming weeks we will be seeking your support for a new, additional funding initiative commensurate with the ethos and scale of our nature based activities and which we hope you will also find fun. More to follow! The Trustees yet again thank you for your participation in and support of the woodland, of which we all remain proud, having again achieved Green Flag status this year. As always please feel free to approach any of the Trustees with constructive ideas for improvement and indeed any concerns.

Please enjoy the newsletter.

S.F. Exell

Stuart Exell (Chairman)

Co-op local charities scheme.

For the first time, Tarvin Community Woodland Trust has been selected this year as a recipient for the local charity disbursement scheme which is run by the Co-op. When a member scans their card, 5% of any spending on Co-op brand produce is marked to provide a future discount against purchases – the modern equivalent of the “divi”. At the same time, a further 1% of the same spending is put into a separate fund, to be disbursed to three local charities. For Tarvin this year they are St Andrew’s Church, the Community Centre and the Woodland. If the member has told the Co-op that they wish their contribution to go to a particular charity, then all of the 1% will go there. Otherwise, the remaining cash will be divided equally between all three. What an excellent way of supporting village organisations while shopping locally! And, were you to tell the Co-op that you would like ALL of your contribution to go to the woodland, we’d be overjoyed!

School work in the woodland.

Trustees spent a Friday afternoon in May working with Miss Steele and Year 3 on “Outdoor Classroom Day”. The children learned about identifying trees from their leaves, identifying birds by picking out their song and discovered the hidden truth about Oak Apples! The day was such a success that we have been invited this year to work with Year 1 and 2 classes as they study the changes of the seasons through the year and how the woodland alters as the seasons change. We’re really excited!

The outcome from the plant sale.

The Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Plant Sale in mid-May is now a village institution and 2017’s sale was a really good morning.. First-class plants of all descriptions crowded the front of Tarvin Methodist Church and, from an early hour, villagers, friends and passers-by flocked in. The event was more successful than ever this year and raised over £1,600 for Trust funds. Other than a grant from the Parish Council, all of the money to run the woodland comes from our own fund-raising, plus donations from generous Tarvin folk, so this boost for our cash was most welcome. In a wonderful display of synergy, Tarvin Methodist Church simultaneously ran a very busy and lively coffee morning, thereby making it a great event in every way! Watch out for us - we’ll be there again in mid-May next year!

The Jim Grogan Award.

There have now been eight of these awards presented, each one recognising the pupil of Tarvin School who has shown the greatest interest in and understanding of the plants and animals in their environment. This year's worthy recipient was Annabel Thorp. Trustees are thrilled that Tarvin School is working so hard to foster a love of and a respect for nature in our youngsters and we are pleased that the Trust is able to recognise this through the presentation of the prestigious Jim Grogan Award.

Our information boards.

Users of the woodland will by now be well-used to the small green information boards that pop up at various points and which are regularly changed. Our hope is that these can make a walk more interesting as people are encouraged to look more closely at the plants, birds and animals to which the woodland is home. It is our intention also to add two permanently-sited large signs, one at the Broomheath Lane and the other at the Hockenhull Lane gateway. These will introduce people to the story of the woodland's development and explain a little about our hopes for its future. Unlike the small signs, which are relatively inexpensive, these large signs inevitably cost much more, and we are very grateful for the help of the Trustees of the George Heath Foundation, who have generously assisted with their funding. When you look at the new signs and see the Dragonfly logo, give a thought to George and to the splendid work that his Trustees are doing in his memory.

New seats in Saxon Heath woodland.

Taylor Wimpey were due to transfer the woodland to us in a "furnished" condition. However, rather than providing the fixtures, they gave us a small amount of money with which to purchase them ourselves. This enabled us to commission two seats, identical with those in the 'old' woodland, from craftsman-welder Gordon Ledwards and they are now installed in the woodland. If you are walking in the woodland, why not give them a try? To complete the job, we are in the process of sorting out a notice board to go at the Austins Hill gateway and CWaC have promised to install a dog bin at the Fairfax Avenue kissing gate once the roads are adopted by the Authority. When all that is completed, then the new woodland will just need time – and lots of effort from the volunteers.

Woodland Birds.

Unsurprisingly, our August bird survey identified the fewest number of species in the woodland this year. This is not because the birds were not there but because they had stopped singing. This is a sure sign that the breeding season is almost over with the adult birds going into moult and skulking where they can't be seen by predators. Fully grown feathers are, in effect, a lifeless structure and must be replaced through a process which is a little like milk teeth being replaced by permanent teeth in humans, with the old feathers being pushed out of their follicles by new feathers growing underneath. The process is a gradual one and occurs in sequence across the skin to ensure there aren't any bald patches. Moulting patterns vary from species to species. Larger species take longer to moult (a Herring Gull may take up to 6 months) but smaller birds like blue tits may moult all their feathers over a 6-week period. Timing is also variable with migrant birds, such as chiffchaffs moulting earlier than non-migrants. Whilst birds moult they can look very different from normal so you shouldn't be surprised if you see blackbirds with spotted heads in the late summer!

Woodland Bird Boxes

Pete Maiden and helpers recently completed a survey and can now report on this year's uptake of the boxes by our feathered friends. There are 55 boxes at present. Five of them are intended for large birds – three for tawny owls and two for woodpeckers – and all of these have remained unoccupied. It is difficult to persuade these birds to take up residence - doing so may take many years before we are successful and so we aren't downhearted at our lack of success thus far. The other 50 boxes are intended for smaller birds and 45 of them were occupied – a success rate of 90%. There are six boxes intended for nuthatches (4) and tree creepers (2). The nuthatch boxes housed one nuthatch and two great tits, with one remaining empty. Only one tree creeper box was occupied – by a blue tit, with the other remaining empty. For the 44 blue or great tit boxes, 42 had been occupied – over 95% occupations. This is probably our best year yet and may be a reflection of the woodland becoming more established. It is certain that we have other birds which make their nests in trees, bushes and thickets and so the contribution of Tarvin woodland to the success of our wild bird populations is significant – and is increasing.

Apple pressing day.

The first Saturday in October (this year **Saturday 7th October**) has become a fixed point in the Tarvin calendar as the day of the **Woodland Apple Pressing**. We now have all our own equipment, thanks to generous benefactors, and promise that, if you bring a bucketful of apples and a clean milk container, you can take fresh apple juice home with you. The day runs from **11.00am to 3.00pm** and is free of charge. (However, buying hot drinks or cooked snacks will incur a small charge, just to cover our costs.) Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Tarvin Wildlife Watch will both be there, with interesting activities for youngsters. Do come along, with or without young people, and enjoy a really good Tarvin event. (By the way, I think that last year demonstrated that the day will go ahead, whatever the weather might have in store for us!)

Our 8th Green Flag.

When we were awarded the Green Pennant (later re-named Green Flag [Community]) in 2010, we were absolutely thrilled. Eight years later, we are just as delighted to have been awarded number 8! The Green Flag is the quality mark for public open spaces and is only awarded to places which meet the highest of standards. There are two groups who deserve thanks for enabling this to be achieved. One is the Tarvin community who, by their generosity, enable us to pay for the upkeep and steady improvement of our woodland. The other group consists of our many volunteers who, through selfless work and effort, keep the woodland in its excellent condition and are gradually achieving remarkable improvements. Each year, well over 1,000 hours of voluntary work are invested in the woodland – regularly on Thursday mornings and, intermittently, on Saturday morning. Would you like to be involved? Just give us a call – **(01829) 741172**.

Woodland footpaths.

While the footpaths through the original woodland (known as Grogan's Walk) are public footpaths, the ones in the Saxon Heath woodland are merely permissive paths. It is our ambition that all of our pathways should be designated as Public Footpaths and so we will be applying for the 'new' path to be registered (and shown on the definitive map) in the near future. Meanwhile, everyone is welcome to use the 'new' path, as long as they are willing to respect the woodland and the work of those who maintain it.

Bring your apples to our

FAMILY · APPLE · PRESSING · DAY

on Saturday 7th October 2017

from 11.00am to 3.00pm

IN THE WOODLAND (behind Crossfields)

plus apple bobbing, apple-themed crafts,
teas, coffees, hot dogs and burgers!

Come and join in the fun!

Join us for our Autumn

COFFEE · MORNING

with Cakes and a Raffle!

at Tarvin Methodist Church

between 10.00am and Noon

on Saturday 21st October 2017

Do come and support us!