

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 9th May 2015.

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

Email to: info@tarvincommunitywoodland.org

“Crowsfoot Cottage,”

Old Moss,

Stapleford,

April 2015

Dear Friends

Since our last written communication in the Autumn, changes to the ownership and organisation of TCWT have moved apace — as the attached latest News from the Woodland explains. The bottom line is that our Community is now the effective owner, in perpetuity, of both the existing and new woodland areas. With good legal advice the changes have been implemented in such a way that the Community can be confident that its special amenity is fully protected from sale to, or exploitation by, any third party to the detriment of its owners, you the Community.

We are now concentrating once again on cost-effective maintenance and development projects, the latest one being the water scrapes for which we are attempting to raise grant funding. Should we be successful, the actual site work will be carried out in early Autumn this year.

Occupation of the new Saxon Heath housing continues to grow and, personally, I have found it gratifying to meet some of our new neighbours in the woodland and have tried to help them to integrate by introducing them to other Tarvin Village based organisations.

So, I take this opportunity to reiterate my request from the last Newsletter and ask any residents, established or new, to join us in the Community Woodland Trust in any appropriate capacity. Please consider an exploratory meeting with me or any other Trustee, without any prior commitment, to consider what could be involved in terms of knowledge, skills and time. For example, most volunteers join in work for two or three hours a week when they can - without obligation. We all find it satisfying, fun and have made new friends.

“Your Community needs you”

Spring is evidently arriving in the Woodland as the flowers, new leaves and noisy bird activity clearly shows. I hope you continue to enjoy your unique and splendid facility.

/Continued

Finally, please plan and encourage your family and friends to attend our Plant Sale on Saturday 9th May at the Methodist Chapel. This is our major fund raiser and many bargains will be available. Please see elsewhere in this Newsletter for details.

I wish you all a balmy and enjoyable Spring and Summer and look forward to seeing you at the Plant Sale.

Best Wishes

Stuart Exell
Chairman of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust

Recent changes for our Woodland and for the Trust.

The ownership of the woodland

The end of 2014 was a momentous time for Tarvin Community Woodland Trust. Firstly, the documents allowing us to take over the woodland strip between the new Taylor Wimpey estate and the A51 road were finalised and have been lodged with the Land Registry. We expect that the deal will be finally completed once all building work is finished and this should be no later than April 2017. Soon thereafter, it should be possible to open the new footpath in order to extend the “woodland walk” right through to Austin’s Hill. Secondly, we completed a deal with Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (CWaC) whereby we acquired the ownership of the existing woodland for a nominal sum. Obtaining the original 125 year lease on the woodland was a huge achievement but this now gives the community even greater security that the land will remain as amenity woodland in perpetuity. The liabilities inherent in taking ownership of these two pieces of land were reduced considerably by setting up a Company Limited by Guarantee: Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd.

The Trust is immensely grateful for the guidance and help we received from David Thorp and the Nantwich legal firm of Bowcock Cuerden. They not only us piloted us through the legal procedures and complexities but also provided the woodland with very considerable (and much-needed) sponsorship. They are truly friends of Tarvin Woodland!

What do these changes actually involve?

The changes that have taken place will have implications which may

jobs in the woodland on a Thursday morning. That is why we felt that we should let everyone know who the **Directors** are, what it is that we do and how you can contact us.

Stuart Exell	Chairman	(01829) 740337
Peter Maiden	Vice-Chairman & Tarvin Village Tree Warden	(01829) 741078
John Daines	Treasurer & Company Secretary	(01829) 740381
Charles Bradley	Secretary	(01829) 741172
John Sim	Safety Officer	(01829) 741922
Bob Howard		(01829) 741129
Robin Jones		(01829) 749004
Martin Lloyd		(01829) 740714
Noel Radcliffe		(01829) 740792

We are always happy to talk with people about the woodland. If you have ideas about how it should be run or if you would like to help us with all of the tasks that need doing, please have a word with one of the Directors, either by phone or at the plant sale on May 9th at Tarvin Methodist Church.

APPLE PRESSING — ADVANCE NOTICE

Over the past few years, we have noticed how much fruit — especially apples — is left to rot beneath the trees of the village. Apples in particular will make good over-winter food for birds and so they are not really wasted, but we thought that it would be good to hold an event in the autumn for families to come along and make their own apple juice.

Watch out for the details later in the Summer!

the transfer of pollen from all the Spanish bluebells in neighbouring gardens, ours are likely to be cross-breeds — but beautiful none-the-less. Do go and see them.
(By the way, did you know that the bluebell of Scotland is not a bluebell at all — it's a harebell!)

Our woodland wildlife

We believe that badgers are visiting the woodland, travelling across the A51 under cover of dark. Holes have been dug and, as they follow the same route each night, tracks are being formed. Has anyone seen a hedgehog in the woodland? Part of the reason for their increasing scarcity (as well as the danger from traffic) is that they are one of the badger's favourite foods – and the badger population is increasing. Here is an example of "Nature, red in tooth and claw"! Bird activity is increasing, especially in the morning. A few people have seen (and many more have heard) the lesser spotted Woodpeckers drumming. They do this partly to mark their territory but, mostly, to find grubs under the bark of trees. Dead trees are a really good source of food for them. Nuthatches are again to be heard and seen on the large oaks behind Crossfields. Finally, whenever you look upwards (especially in the woodland) you seem to see a buzzard. Can it be long before we have a pair nesting in the woodland?

Ash Dieback.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has produced further information, which says that the spread of this fungal disease of Ash trees is now inevitable. We have a number of ash trees, of various sizes, and so we must be vigilant. However, should the disease strike, it is by no means clear what we should do. DEFRA recommend removal and burning of all infected trees but there are other experts who suggest that, if ALL the above-ground material is removed, the roots (which are not infected) will throw up new coppice stems which would, at least initially, be uninfected. We plan to have our large oak trees inspected and we will ask the inspector to have a look at our ash trees during his visit.

So, who are we?

The people who "run" the woodland are, for the most part, invisible. Most of the work is done 'behind the scenes', with the only folk much in evidence being the bunch of stalwart volunteers who are out doing

not be immediately apparent. This seems a good opportunity to explain what these changes will involve.

What do we mean when we say that "We now own the woodland?"

Legally, land has to be owned by someone and the 'someone' in this case is Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd - our Company Limited by Guarantee. The Company has Directors (who are the former 'working' Trustees) and all of the legal rights and responsibilities attaching to the land are vested in the Directors. The Articles of the Company state clearly that the land can only be used as a public amenity woodland and the Directors must operate it on behalf of the community – hence it can be considered to be owned on behalf of the Tarvin community. Because it is no longer subject to a 125 year lease, it is also fair to say that, in a very real sense, it will be owned on behalf of the village for ever!

Why has the Trust become a Company?

The woodland is now going to be run by Tarvin Community Woodland Trust Ltd, rather than the original Tarvin Community Woodland Trust - but in effect little else has changed! Indeed, we will continue to refer to it as "The Trust". The same 'working' Trustees have become the Directors of the Company, we will still hold our meetings on the first Monday of each month and we will continue to be out in the woodland doing maintenance every Thursday morning. However, there is a vital difference between the Trust and the Company. Legally, Trustees personally are liable for the commitments of the Trust, although we have insurance for most foreseeable circumstances. Nevertheless, we want future recruits to feel comfortable at the level of exposure and so have created the Company Limited by Guarantee to achieve this because its Directors are more distanced than Trustees. Additionally, they also have Directors & Officers Insurance, which covers any liability in ordinary trading except for dishonest and illegal actions. Directors must also be members and all of the latter are only financially exposed to a £10 guarantee, should the Company fail. So, when the current (gently ageing) group of Directors has to pass the responsibility of running the woodland on to others, there is a much better chance that folk will feel able to take on the responsibility! The Company has no shares, can NEVER give a dividend and the Directors cannot make a personal gain. All monies must be re-invested for the benefit of the woodland, and hence the community.

The company also has to have a group of members. These are people from within the community who have the best interests of the woodland at heart. It is through the annual meeting of these members that the community will be able, across the years, to influence the way that its woodland is run.

What things will stay the same?

Almost everything – the changes are all to do with the organisation – the bureaucracy. Indeed, if the people of Tarvin notice a difference when they are walking through the woodland, then the Trust has got things badly wrong!

News from the Woodland.

Tarvin's Jubilee Oak.

When Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Diamond Jubilee in 2012, a large number of acorns were collected from the various Royal Estates and grown into saplings. These were distributed to communities who wished to plant a memorial oak tree. On behalf of Tarvin village, Alison Holden and Tarvin W.I. obtained one of these and Alison has been growing it on (in a large pot in her garden!) until quite recently. In a short ceremony, it was planted in the large grass verge at Austin's Hill, where, in time, it will become a fine specimen oak tree marking one of the entrances to our village. Look out for what is now a small tree with a very large guard, which bears a brass plate, which says, "Tarvin W.I. Jubilee Oak 2012". Our thanks go to Alison and to Tarvin W.I. for this important contribution to our village environment.

Introducing water to the woodland.

The bids for funding are now in and we await (with bated breath) the outcome. When we hear something, we'll let you know!

Removal of some trees in the commemorative avenue.

After taking heed of the community's opinion, we have now removed alternate trees in the avenue of commemorative oaks. As they begin to grow this year, we should see an improvement – not only to the trees themselves but also to the growth of plants beneath them. Keep your eyes open!

Tarvin's woodland fruit trees.

You remember that, two years ago, we acquired sufficient apple trees for the woodland to qualify as an orchard. Any fruit which had set was

removed over the last two years, so that the trees could establish themselves, but we intend to allow them to develop some apples this year. We also have several wild crab apple trees. These crop prolifically and, while we may not think that they taste nice, the birds and insects love them! In our hedges, there are also a number of young damson trees. These do not get pruned but are able to cope well enough on their own.

Work in the woodland.

Recently, the disabled access (RADAR) gate at Townfield Lane was moved, all of the hedges have been trimmed and now look very smart, rails in the fence are replaced as they rot, maintenance has been done to the path and a great deal of coppicing has been undertaken. And it's all been done during wintertime! All of the work is done by our band of volunteers, who work so hard to keep the woodland in top condition and, last year, their time donated amounted to well over a thousand hours – worth more than £6,500 if paid at UK minimum rate. We could do with a good deal more help. If you'd like to share in the running of our lovely woodland, working with a great bunch of people and making a huge difference to our village, do have a word with one of the Trustees.

Spring flowers

Those of you who have been fortunate enough to go for a walk in the woodland earlier this year will have seen the wonderful displays of snowdrops announcing the start of Spring.. For years, our volunteers have been lifting the clumps of bulbs while they are 'in the green' – in leaf and soon after flowering - dividing them and replanting, in order to "bulk up" the display. This year is different. We have decided to let the plants grow where they are for one year, in order for them to form larger clumps. Then, when we resume the usual cycle in 2016, there will be even more robust clumps with which to work and thus the process of extending our display should proceed even more impressively!

After the snowdrops in early-spring come the wood anemones – also called Windflower. These gorgeous members of the buttercup family, with their little white faces, hide beneath the trees and tell us that Spring has really arrived.

Around early May, the bluebells can be seen — the quintessentially British sign of spring. The place to look for ours is amongst the trees bordering the bridleway at the Hockenhull Lane gateway, with greater numbers growing on the Crossfields side. Interestingly, because of