

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

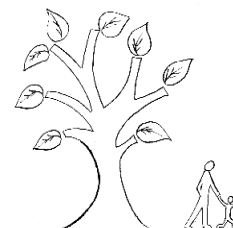
between 10.00am and Noon

on Saturday 12th May 2012.

**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.***



Tarvin Community Woodland Trust
Created by the community for the community

www.tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Email to: info@tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Tarvin 740337

"Crowsfoot Cottage,"
Old Moss,
Stapleford,
Tarvin,
Chester.
CH3 8HR

Dear friends,

April 2012

Maintaining and developing the woodland has involved much activity over the six months since our last newsletter. Non-native tree felling and brash removal, whilst essential, have been disruptive at times for those who use our woodland. Thank you for your understanding - we will continue to minimise disturbance as much as possible. Now that buds are emerging, the felling will cease and the birds will be left in peace to nest in their new boxes and elsewhere. Felling will recommence next winter but on a lesser scale.

The next major project, already underway, is pathway improvement. Relaying the path to full access standards will require a budget of thousands of pounds - entirely beyond our means at present. We have been applying for grant funding, so far without success. However, despite the current economic climate, we are not giving up! Remedial work will be necessary meanwhile (especially where water accumulates) and so we have started to fill in the hollows with hardcore, which will take some time to pack down. So, the more pedestrian traffic using the pathway, the better!

Some problems never go away and require continual management. Two of these: dog fouling and litter have both increased in recent months. Please help us to keep your woodland environmentally safe and attractive for all its users.

I am looking forward to seeing the wild flower meadows appear again this year. They should look better than ever. From the comments we receive, they are clearly appreciated!

The Trustees look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming weeks and in particular at the Plant Sale in May. As always, we welcome comments and suggestions on how to improve the community woodland and its use.

With best wishes

Stuart Exell

Chairman of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust

News from the Woodland.

The work to remove the non-native trees from the woodland was continued during last winter and, while slightly behind schedule, should be completed during next winter. The extra light is already producing a flush of re-growth and the area would regenerate without our intervention. However, we will seize the opportunity to ensure that sufficient (and suitable) trees are in place to permit areas of the woodland to be coppiced on a regular basis. Coppicing will enable a good, dense, creature-friendly screen to develop and will provide the Trust with a small but regular income from the sale of poles and firewood. Reducing the number of 'specimen' trees will allow those that remain to grow into the beautiful, tall trees that we are all looking forward to in our woodland.

It will soon be time to begin the routine mowing. Strips alongside the 'Grogan's Walk' paths will be kept short and the grass pathways through the woodland itself will be mown occasionally, to keep them useable. The rest of the woodland will receive two 'conservation cuts' – mowing at a height of between 4 and 5 inches, to enable small creatures to survive whilst keeping the more rampant vegetation under control.

For years, the historic boundary within the woodland had been allowed to grow, without the maintenance that they would normally have received. The result was that we had rows of hawthorn trees stretching across the woodland, instead of the true hedges that should have been there. Good practice dictated that we should either remove or restore them. The easiest option would have been to remove many of the trees in them. The more difficult – but far better – choice was to restore them by having them traditionally layed. John Plant and John Sim have worked steadily over the past eighteen months and, starting with 'hedges' that were very far from ideal, they have succeeded in producing a masterpiece of hedge laying – but with one or two short lengths left, for future comparison! As the newly layed hedges grow, they will now be managed so that they provide examples of typical Cheshire stock-proof hedges. It is a tribute to John and John that they have given us such a wonderful example of true rural craftsmanship that villagers are going to be able to enjoy for years to come.

A major absence within our woodland, commented upon by many, is an area of water (or even of significant dampness). This limits the usefulness of the woodland to wildlife and it has been our intention to remedy this if we can. A survey is being carried out during 2012. Test bores have been sunk and the water level within them will be monitored over a complete year, to study the level of the soil water with which we can work. Once we understand the way that the ground water behaves, we may be better able to develop the wetland area that we would all like.

The wild flower areas should continue to show how they are developing during this year. It takes at least ten years for a meadow to establish and the newest one is only twelve months old, so there is a long way to go, but we can all appreciate the colour and the beauty as we walk through the woodland. It's a lovely and very special place. Do enjoy it!

Bird Boxes in the Woodland

From the very beginning, there have always been bird boxes in the woodland. The original ones were made of wood and we found that they suffered at the teeth of squirrels, which treated the eggs or fledglings as a useful meal! Despite the greatly increased cost, we began to buy "squirrel-proof" boxes and these have been much more successful. The boxes are cared for by our parish tree warden, Peter Maiden and each year he undertakes a survey to discover how the boxes are being used.

We know that people are interested in the patterns of nesting and are keen to know the outcome. The results are as follows:-

Last year, 22 of our 26 boxes were used at least once and the lack of use of the other four is explicable, with the problems having now been rectified.

We have 15 blue tit boxes and 6 great tit boxes but we found that these boxes were used interchangeably by both blue and great tits. To find out how many blue or great tits are using each of the patterns of boxes, we will watch each box during Spring 2012. Of the other boxes, the starling box was unused but nuthatches nested in at least one of the boxes designed for them.

There are some areas that as yet have no boxes at all and it is our intention to install further boxes (although some installations will have to wait until the felling work is completed).

Many of the boxes have been sponsored by villagers and we are very grateful to be able to swell the numbers in this way. If you would like to sponsor a box (or to make a contribution towards one – they cost £30 each), then do contact one of the Trustees.

Volunteers

Tarvin Community Woodland was created by the community for the community and most of the work is done by our loyal and dedicated band of Woodland Volunteers. They meet as a group at a time to suit themselves (often a Thursday morning) and enjoy excellent companionship whilst enjoying the fresh air and beautiful surroundings – and, of course, improving the woodland! There is much to be done and so all levels of fitness and energy can be accommodated. A regular commitment is valuable but by no means essential – come when you can is the general motto. You can make contact with the Trust through the telephone numbers in the woodland notice boards or by having a word with Trustees at the Plant Sale on Saturday 12th May.

This would also be an excellent opportunity for you to pass on comments about the woodland and its development. It is very much a **community** woodland and so the views of the community are hugely important to us. Do come and support us!