



www.tarvincommunitywoodland.org
Email to: info@tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Tarvin 740337

"Crowsfoot Cottage,"
Old Moss,
Stapleford,
Tarvin,
Chester.
CH3 8HR
April 2011

Dear friends,

When we wrote our spring newsletter at this time last year, we could only have guessed that we would now have so many things to tell you about the events of the past year and of the plans we have for the Woodland.

The management of the woodland has taken great strides and has been awarded a Green Pennant – the quality mark for open spaces. We have completed the first part of the footpath improvements scheme – the installation of drainage alongside and across the path behind the school – and are hoping to embark on the next – restoring the path to its original six-foot width. Thereafter, we will seek funding to have the path surfaced to full wheelchair-access standards.

A large part of the felling of the non-native trees has been completed and this will be finished in the autumn. Much of the historic hedging has been laid, with new pathways through the hedges giving interesting walks through the trees being planned.

The death of Jim Grogan, our founder, inspiration and source of encouragement, is deeply mourned by all of us. However, Jim left a body of Trustees who are ready and willing to continue his work and, with the help of the community, we aim to continue his plans to improve the Woodland. I am always happy to discuss what we are doing. If you wish to offer suggestions and either praise or (constructive) criticism, they are always welcome.

Sincerely

Stuart Exell

Chairman of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust

Managing our Woodland.

Much work has been done over the last twelve months to bring the Woodland into a properly managed state, after its rather hap-hazard initial planting and the subsequent neglect of the previous landholder. The prime objective, once a felling licence (the forestry equivalent of planning permission) was granted, was to work on the removal of non-native trees and those trees which were in the wrong place. This is being done without cost to the Trust (in exchange for the timber extracted) by Broomheath Plantation, to whom we are most grateful. The work, valued at about £16,000, has gone well and, although it won't all be completed this spring, much of it is finished, with just some clearing up remaining to be done. It will re-commence in the autumn.

The re-growth of the woodland will produce a markedly different appearance. The denser vegetation produced by coppicing (obliging the tree branches to grow from ground level instead of from a trunk) will provide a much improved habitat for both animals and birds and will act as a much more effective noise barrier, reducing the sound from traffic which can reach our homes. There will also be much improved light levels in the gardens which bound the woodland.

The two Johns, John Plant and John Sim have spent much time laying some of the hedges which marked the historic field boundaries. The results of their efforts are a joy to behold and the new hedges will provide an attractive visual feature, drawing people off the main pathway into some interesting walks through the trees, as well as benefitting bird life. More will be done next year.

This year has also seen the completion of the fencing around the whole woodland. Some of this has been donated by organisations such as Tarvin WI and Morrison's Supermarkets. We are very grateful for their help.

All the costs of the management of the woodland (including the routine maintenance) are borne by means of donations and fundraising. Members of the community are very generous and Tarvin Parish Council itself makes a grant to help with upkeep, although this year, in the present financial climate, this has had to be reduced to £875. Our intention is to try to keep our routine expenditure to about £2,500 and so we must fundraise to meet the shortfall. Please support our sales and coffee mornings when you can!

We are grateful for the help we have had from dog walkers in keeping the woodland free from dog faeces. Not only do they disgustingly clog up the mower but the danger presented to children from the Toxocara parasite is ever present and we need everyone's co-operation and vigilance if the woodland is to remain a truly healthy and safe place for our young people.

Finally – a plea. We note that a new tree has appeared in the woodland. Regrettably, it is not particularly appropriate in either its species-type or its location and consequently it will have to be removed. Please talk to the Trust before anything is planted or before doing work of any description in the woodland. Names and telephone numbers of the Trustees are in the woodland notice boards. We are pleased whenever folk wish to help us in whatever we are trying to do and we hate it when we and the community seem to be working at odds with each other!

Jim Grogan

It is with very mixed feelings that we talk of the recent death of our founder Jim Grogan. We will miss him deeply but working with him has been such a tremendous inspiration to all of us that we feel that we have been privileged and we are much the better for it.

The Woodland itself will be Jim's lasting memorial but the Trust plans to remember and to celebrate his life and achievements in several ways. The idea to call the woodland "Grogan's Wood" has been rejected – Jim would have hated it. To him, it was **Tarvin's** woodland, not his. However, naming the path that he walked daily through the woodland as "Grogan's Walk" is a much better idea and we will do that. We will also try to have his name marked along the footpaths on the local Ordnance Survey maps.

We hope that we will be able to install some permanent memorial with which to commemorate his life. At present, plans are only being discussed but one idea might be to put something at the centre of the circle of beech trees which Jim planted close to the Townfield Lane entrance. If you have suggestions to make or other ideas to offer, do have a word with the Chairman or with one of the Trustees. The Plant Sale and Coffee Morning would be an ideal opportunity!

Work on the footpath.

Last year's newsletter, when discussing this topic, said, "Won't it be wonderful to be able to walk the entire footpath with dry feet?"
..... And it is, isn't it?

During two weeks in early summer 2010, a contractor came in and installed 270 linear metres of french drains, with 11 cross drains and associated soakaways. The vast improvement in 'walkability' throughout the past winter is evidence that they are working well. The large amount of excess subsoil, left after the excavation, has been levelled and will eventually become another wild flower meadow.

Our next task is to improve the surface of the path. Some filling-in of holes has already been done and we are hoping soon to be able to instruct a contractor to begin work during the summer months on restoring the full six-foot width of the pathway. This will enable people to walk side-by-side along the full length of "Grogan's Walk" (as we intend the Woodland footpaths to be known).

Our ultimate aim is to bring the whole length of the footpath up to the standard required for full wheelchair access. This will be very expensive and we do not expect to achieve it for some considerable time. However, it is intended that plans will be drawn up in the near future, so that we can get some idea of the total cost before we begin applying for the grants which will be needed for the work to be done.

Work with Tarvin School

Tarvin Community Woodland Trust is very keen to encourage youngsters to get to know and to respect the countryside around them. To this end, the Trust is establishing an annual 'Countryside and Wildlife Award' for Tarvin School – to be known as "The Jim Grogan Award". Each year, a pupil will receive the award for displaying a great knowledge and understanding of the plants, animals and environment of Tarvin. The award will take the form of:-

- An entry in a handsome leather-bound book, kept with the School logbook.
- A plaque and certificate, to be retained by the pupil.
- A book token, to be used as the pupil desires.

It is expected that the award will be presented as a part of a school assembly during the last part of the summer term.

Trustees have also agreed to go into the woodland with groups of children and their teachers in order to explain what is being done and to introduce some of the myriad points of interest that any walk in our woodland can raise.

Disabled People

It is our intention that the whole community should have full access to the woodland. However, we are aware that the area around the access gates provides difficulty for wheelchair users and, as yet, there are no signs indicating that the locks are RADAR locks (the same locks used to enable disabled people to access, for example, the loos on motorways). Both of these issues are in hand and we hope to be able to report that they have been sorted out in our next newsletter in October.

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 14th 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!

Plants and Wildlife

Jim Grogan was a true countryman and a fount of knowledge of both flora and fauna. He and Sheila spent a lot of time last spring planting the Snowdrop drifts which have been so lovely this year and which will get better and better. The Bluebell wood and the Wood Anemones that are being gradually introduced are also there thanks to Jim. There is work for us to do on the wild flower meadows – particularly the new one to be sown alongside the path behind the school – and we will strive to increase the presence of a wide range of native plants for the community to enjoy. For instance, sowing plants such as teasels will be great for attracting seed-eating birds such as goldfinches.

The new squirrel proof bird boxes have proved to be a great success, with some enjoying double & triple occupancy during 2010. More are being added, although, because they are expensive, the rate at which they are bought will not be rapid. Six were added this Spring.

Much of the large-scale work is now reaching the 'tidying-up' stage and, very soon, most of the brash will be gone. Thereafter, the new growth will prosper and the re-growth of those native trees that have been coppiced will be very rapid. The whole woodland, with a lower canopy and denser under-storey, will be much prettier and, more importantly, will encourage wildlife of all sorts. However, it is not intended that the woodland should become a park and so 'tidiness' is not a prime objective. We intend to leave occasional piles of brash in the hope of encouraging both birds and animals to make greater use of the various wildlife habitats we will thereby create.

The Green Pennant Award

We are proud that the Woodland was awarded a Green Pennant in Autumn 2010. This is a national award that recognises high quality green spaces that are managed by voluntary and community groups, and it is a part of the Green Flag Scheme; the national standard for quality green spaces. In order to be successful, we had to satisfy judges (in seven different areas) that it is:-

A welcoming place that is easily accessed by all members of the community.

Healthy, safe and secure, with risks minimised and dog fouling addressed.

Well maintained and clean, with effective management in place.

Environmentally sustainable, particularly recycling materials where possible. Taking account of **Biodiversity and Heritage**, with conservation issues dealt with appropriately.

Ensuring **Community Involvement**, both in Tarvin and the surrounding area.

Achieving appropriate targets, acquiring funding and using it well.

We were also very fortunate in winning **one of only 10 awards** made **nationally** for innovation. Our woodland was the first "gardening licence" that the Highways Agency had ever awarded and, from that beginning, we have taken it on to become leaseholders - **a unique development!**

Judging for this year will take place in the late spring. It will be a great tribute to Jim Grogan's memory if we are able to retain the Green Pennant for a further twelve months.

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 14th May 2011.

**An excellent selection of shrubs,
fuchsias, perennials and vegetable
plants 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.***