



The ongoing development of the Trust 2013-14

www.tarvincommunitywoodland.org

Charity Registration Number 1129586

An Annual Report on the activities of Tarvin Community Woodland Trust (TCWT) *Dr Stuart Exell (Chairman)*

Our trust document states that the trustees must apply the Trust's funds in furthering the following objects:

"To conserve, restore and re-establish native trees, plants and all types of wildlife by provision of a community woodland area in Tarvin for the benefit of the public at large and with the view to improving the quality of life."

In doing this our principal and enduring responsibility is the maintenance of the woodland for sustainability at affordable cost. Trustees believe we have achieved this level of equilibrium thanks to community support which includes volunteers, the parish council, fund raising and donations, for all of which the Trust is very grateful. However, rather than rest on its laurels the Trust, while continuing to manage the current facility, is very much looking to the future in terms of:

- Its own structure and constitution to ensure it can attract future trustees and volunteers over the longer term, as well as financial support.
- Extending the woodland to provide larger and more diverse opportunities for community use; as a next step we have an 'in principle' agreement to extend the woodland facility from Broomheath Lane to Austin's Hill as part of the Taylor Wimpey development - at little cost to the TCWT. This will take 2 to 3 years to complete before community access will become possible.
- Short and longer term development projects both existing and ongoing:
 - An extensive drainage project along the pathway behind the school has proved very successful but, seeing the result of prolonged heavy rain in recent months, it may be necessary to extend this drainage.
 - The success of the pathway refurbishment encourages the Trust to be ambitious in fund raising for further substantial development projects.
 - Our first bird hide and bird feeding station are soon to be followed by a second hide in the school grounds and reflect the Trust's commitment to supporting community and school educational interests.
 - Planning is underway for a number of water features called "scrapes" close to the school with the aim of attracting a wider range of wildlife species

providing interest for users of the woodland but also added scientific opportunities for school studies.

- In the longer term, if there is sufficient interest, we are also considering a more extensive pond development towards Townfield lane.

In all of these ventures the community should know that the Trust always has the health and safety implications in mind and when necessary seeks independent, professional external advice. We would welcome suggestions for other/alternative projects which could benefit/interest the wider Tarvin community.

In the past year a wider general issue has come to the fore, prompted by the Trust, through its PR activities in both the local and wider Cheshire media, viz ownership/attachment by individuals and families to particular trees, planted in some cases many years ago. The issue is that in several areas of the woodland trees have been planted in larger than sustainable numbers on the basis that once the survivors become established thinning out would be necessary. Unfortunately, the latter has been greatly delayed but will have to be addressed if we are to have an attractive managed woodland. The debate on how to manage this dichotomy has been started and while action is not urgent we need a plan to manage the thinning of trees or they will compete for space and light and start to destroy themselves - with unattractive consequences. So, all community members are invited to contact a Trustee, should they feel ownership of or affiliation to particular trees, to enable us to build a picture of the scale of the issue. However, nature is nature, so the Trust is conscious it will have to do the necessary to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the woodland while at the same time being sensitive to individuals' needs.

Finally, TCWT owes thanks to a number of people and organisations for their active support over the past year:

- Supporters at the annual plant sale and coffee morning who contribute so well to our financial health.
- The Tarvin Parish Council for their annual grant and wider support in woodland management issues and relationships with CWAC.
- WREN and CWAC for their generous support of our major path project; they should know we plan further requests of support.
- Broomheath Plantation for its forestry management support in particular felling and timber/brash management but also considerable practical advice. The Trust is pleased to have a very cost effective partner and indeed reliable friend in managing our woodland on your behalf.
- Our band of volunteers who turn out most Thursday mornings to make the practicalities all happen. They enjoy the work, the 'craic' and the coffee and would welcome new recruits.

While we are fortunate in having access to a wide mix of both management and practical skills at present, they will need to be replaced in the future by those of younger trustees and volunteers. I should be happy to meet with anyone interested in making a contribution to our shared community woodland enterprise.