

Tarvin Celebrates!

On Saturday, October 19th over a hundred people joined together to celebrate the completion of the rebuilt footpath through the Tarvin Community Woodland, a registered charity. The Charity's Trustees had put together a successful bid for funds from WREN, the distributor of Grants from Landfill Tax and the Cheshire West and Chester Rural Support Fund. The donors each funded over 40% of the £21,000 project with the balance coming from the village community. The construction was undertaken by WE Parsons of Ellesmere Port.

Representatives from the donors, contractor, local organisations and the community met at Tarvin Primary School and were hosted in the main hall by Andy Davies, headmaster. The school has close links to the woodland and a branch from the main path links to a gate at the back of the school playing field. Andy welcomed everyone on behalf of the school, which still had its major Community Exhibition displays on show. This year's theme was "Into the forest", covering many aspects of the world's forests including the local woodland. Each class had developed a particular theme and several used the woodland as a key resource for their displays.

The new path was formally opened when a ribbon was cut by Rebecca Ridley-Thomas, Becky Cheadle and Evie Mulligan, winners of the last three Jim Grogan Wildlife Awards, presented to the School annually by the Trust.

Stuart Exell, Chairman of the Trustees, said how much the new path is contributing to a much improved experience for the many people who use it. Its completion is a major landmark and provides a firm basis for the future when there will be a longer woodland on completion of the extension being built by Taylor Wimpey. He stressed that the woodland is there for the future and therefore it is so important that the children and young people are involved.

Cllr David Robinson, chairman of the WREN funding panel, said that the bid had met all the criteria for success. It very clearly showed community need with over forty letters of support. The track record, level of volunteer involvement and local financial commitment all demonstrated that the project was clearly sustainable.

Cllr Eleanor Johnson, representing Cheshire West, said that she had followed the progress of the woodland since the 125 year lease was signed in 2009. The woodland is clearly an integral part of the community and CWaC had been keen to support a good bid.

Eric Plenderleath, former Lord Mayor of Chester, responded for the village and said that as a regular user he was pleased to see the number of users; not just dog walkers but also family groups and young people.

John Daines, a trustee, explained the Green Flag scheme which recognises that a site is a high-quality green space, a well-managed and welcoming place and central to the local community. The woodland had just received its fourth Community Award which reflects all the hard work done each week by the team of volunteers.

Refreshments were then served by members of Tarvin Methodist Church, a key partner of the woodland. Those present were able to meet the visitors and discuss their hopes for the future of the woodland.

The Community Woodland in Tarvin is a much-loved facility that is used by many members of the community. It was originally created in 1986 and the first job was to put in a solid main path from end to end. This was done by volunteers at minimal cost, using road planings and free-loan machinery. Over the following years the path had deteriorated so that it was not very suitable for mobility scooters or child buggies with small wheels. Completion of the pathway improvement has meant that the long-time aim of getting it rebuilt has been achieved.