



THE FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST NEWS



Summer 2014

Website: www.focf.org.uk

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcharnwoodforest>

Mission Statement: To work towards the preservation of the countryside and local environment of Charnwood Forest Regional Park for the benefit of those who live within it, and for those who visit, and for future generations. We aim to be an effective, informative and influential voluntary organisation.

VACANCIES

It is essential that we fill the roles of **Events Organiser** as soon as possible (could be a shared task), **Committee Member** as soon as possible and **Secretary** not later than the AGM in March next year.

The Committee wonders how the Society can exist into the future unless there is a functioning Committee and hopes that this deliberately bold advertisement will attract just three members out of our 200+ membership to step forward to offer their services.

If you would like the opportunity of seeing what the Committee does before deciding - you would be very welcome to come and join our convivial gathering (usually at The Brand). Or just talk to us and ask questions. Contact details are overleaf.

STOP PRESS ...

Development threatens Outwoods

Peter Keogh, Chairman of Loughborough South-West Action Group tells us that, as the Group predicted, a victory for the developers at Bramcote Road would bring forth more speculative planning applications leading to the destruction of an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside close to the Outwoods. This is now happening at Nanpantan and Half Way Farm, where LSWAG began its campaign in 2009. Please have a look at the latest application by going to Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) planning portal - P/14/0641/2. Once again it is vital to let CBC and your councillors know your views.

The heading picture this time:
Mount Saint Bernard Abbey from Timberwood Hill

TALKS and WALKS

Our activities for you to enjoy
Individual invitations for each event will be sent to all members by post or email

Indoor meetings take place at Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall at 7.30pm, finishing about 9pm followed by refreshments. Your guests and other non-members are welcome at our talks (for whom we make a small charge of £3 at the door).

To assist our preparations and to help you in case of any change to the arrangements, please tell us you are coming (see individual invitations for details).

It's a big help ... thank you.

2014

- **Wednesday 14th May VISIT/WALK:** Part of old Charnwood Forest Canal, Mike Handford
- **Wednesday 18th June VISIT:** Hosted visit to Stoneywell Cottage. Please carefully read and follow the important guidance in your separate invitation.
- **Wednesday 9th July VISIT:** Martin's Wood and Felicity's Wood. Celebrating 20 year anni-versary of FOCF planting Martin's Wood on 5th March 1994. Meet 10am in Beacon Hill Car Park. Our guide is Eric Porter.
- **Monday 22nd September TALK:** "Lady Jane Grey and Bradgate Park" by Helen Kessling
- **Monday 27th October TALK:** "Old Maps of Charnwood Forest" by Keith Ovenden, Leicestershire & Rutland Records Office
- **Wednesday 12th November** "Meet the Members Annual Dinner" at the Grey Lady

2015

- **Monday 19th January TBC**
- **Monday 16th March AGM** followed by TALK: Richard III and the Battle of Bosworth by Richard Knox

Our Events are Good ... Pass it on

We know our social events, talks, walks and speakers are good because everyone says so. Members often bring along friends who are impressed and join on the spot (and save themselves £3 a head!).

A good idea! Anyone is very welcome to help us to recruit new members into becoming Friends of Charnwood Forest. Invite them along or ask any Committee member for a Membership leaflet.

Ben retires ...

The Committee has said Goodbye to Ben Wheeler who has stepped down after 8 years loyal service to the Committee. His knowledge of the Forest and all things local has been invaluable. He has kept our archives safe and will continue this. He's also a willing stacker of chairs after our meetings! (Everyone is welcome to help with this task!). Ben ... Farewell and Thank You.

... and we welcome Toby

Toby Manning is our capable Webmaster who has recently overseen the upgrade of our Website. After some time offering advice from the wings, he has now been elected to the Committee at the AGM. You are very welcome Toby.

Committee Notes

◆ At our April meeting, as always, we noted the urgent need for “new blood” to join the Committee. So many of our members thoroughly enjoy our social activities and appreciate the behind-the-scenes work done by the Committee. However, this does need more people to serve on the Committee (see separate announcement) otherwise a question-mark is bound to keep arising about the future of our Society.

◆ Chairman, Dick Howard, had raised the possibility of acquiring a woodland copse from the National Forest, to become an FoCF Commemorative woodland. However, it had since become apparent that there would be restrictions imposed which - after much discussion - the Committee decided would make the idea less attractive. It was decided not to proceed but the thought of being able to do this or similar to mark our Society remains to be considered in future.

◆ In considering what value we could offer to Members, and noting that there is a little spare cash in the kitty, it was decided to provide (at cost price) a copy of the excellent new Charnwood Regional Park map, published by the County Council, to each member. It is hoped that members think this is a helpful service to them.

PLANNING POINTS

◆ It was noted that the proposal for housing development at Cropston Road, Anstey has been objected to by County Highways because “traffic congestion in Anstey is at crisis point”.

◆ The proposal for Mountsorrel Quarry extension will go to Public Inquiry. Local residents know that vibration affecting their homes is worsening and is a major issue. This must be recognised.

◆ We have supported the Wildlife Trust by objecting to housing development at Agar Nook.

◆ The Committee regularly observes with some alarm the developing Roeclyffe Manor site. To date, the new boundary wall appears to be blending in reasonably well and we understand a proposal for a 20 space underground car park

has been turned down. Will massive security gates become a “feature”? And what next?

Stoneywell Cottage

“If nature made buildings, they would surely look something like Stoneywell”.

On a recent peaceful Spring Sunday afternoon the cottage enjoys a rest and this quotation seems very apt. However, the opportunity for visitors to see for themselves will soon be here.



The major operation by the National Trust to ensure everything is ready is well underway and an opening date will be announced soon. Conservation work is meticulous. The gardens are being brought back to their former splendour, largely by volunteers. With great deference to the bats inhabiting the roof of the Coach House and Stable, work is progressing to enable this building to be brought into use. Volunteers are receiving extensive training and are well immersed in the vast amounts of information they need to know for the many tasks required. There is a great story to tell.

Donald Gimson has been an enormous help and has given his blessing and approval all along. This will be apparent to visitors.

Our Society has been involved in consultations since mid-2012. There have been strongly held views about some aspects (especially the car park in Whitcrofts Lane, now nearing completion). But we have supported the principle of the National Trust's purpose of maintaining this very special place “forever, for everyone”.

more at: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stoneywell

see also invitation to members only, enclosed.

Who's Who?

Chairman Dick Howard

richardhoward342@btinternet.com 01530 245373

Secretary & Newsletter Douglas Maas doug@idnet.com 01530 242534

Membership Louise Gibson louise@the-grey-lady.co.uk

Treasurer Kim Turner 01530 244921

Events vacancy

Web Master Toby Manning ptm@tobymanning.co.uk

Foot Note

“Scarcely a dank hovel remains in the remotest hamlet that has not now been turned into a gadget-happy country

cottage, a Jaguar resting where the privy used to be.” -
Elspeth Huxley’s observation in 1968