



# THE FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST NEWS



**Spring 2016**

Website: [www.focf.org.uk](http://www.focf.org.uk)

**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.

## Committee Notes

- ◆ The designs for the information boards we are funding for the Wildlife Trust and Woodhouse Eaves are being approved before manufacture.
- ◆ Schools are being approached with a view to getting children to love the Forest from an early age through art projects, etc.
- ◆ We have come to the end of our supply of maps of the Regional Park and a further supply will be sought.
- ◆ Concerns remain about the future use of the Severn-Trent building at Cropston but we are reassured that, as a listed building, the exterior should remain unaltered. Charnwood Council is keeping a close eye on the manner in which the development takes place.
- ◆ Questions about developments at the Roundhouse, Deans Lane, the area opposite Cravens Rough and the proposal for a new dwelling opposite Old John car park were discussed.
- ◆ Even following the expenditure on the 3 notice boards, there will remain a modest surplus of funds, should any member wish to come forward with proposals.
- ◆ Membership remains buoyant as many guests coming to our popular members' meetings do decide to join us.
- ◆ Detailed arrangements for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration hog roast in June are being made. The hog has been ordered!

### 2016 - 2017 PROGRAMME

#### Let us have your ideas

Don't keep it to yourself, if you know of a good speaker, or a good topic please let me, or a member of the Committee know about it. A new slant on an old topic, or something completely different is what we would like your views on. Which subjects do you prefer? We try to have a varied and balanced programme but some topics seem far more popular so please let us know. All suggestions welcome, it is your Society.  
*Dick Howard*

The heading picture this time: Bradgate Park serpent?

## 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)

### 2016

● **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March** AGM followed by a TALK by Matt Beamish - *From Ice Age to War Games: recent archaeological survey and excavation of Bradgate Park*



● **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April** TALK by David Bridge: *Fracking - Our New Neighbour?*

● **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June** VISIT to Ulverscroft Woods and Herbert's Meadow, Leics. & Rutland Wildlife Trust, led by Neil Pilcher. Meet 10am Copt Oak Church (Strictly limited numbers - Members only)

● **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June** THIRTY YEAR celebratory lunchtime Hog Roast at The Brand by kind invitation of Robert and Janie Martin. Full details will follow.

● **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September** TALK by Celia Sanger: *Calke Abbey, History and Gardens: Echoes from the Past.*

● **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October** TALK by Roger Hailwood - *The National Memorial Arboretum*

● **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November** Annual Dinner. To be arranged

## Good News for the Forest

We thank Malcolm and Lynn Smith for advising us that: the appeal against CBC's decision to refuse planning permission for seven houses off Brick Kiln Lane in Shepshed has been dismissed by the Inspector due to the, "substantial material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and landscape".

It is also worth noting that the Inspector took into account CBC's new Core Strategy and supported it where it, "seeks to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure assets including the Charnwood Forest Regional Park".

In another recent decision, an Inspector confirmed that CBC has a 5 year housing supply.

In due course, CBC intend to alter the limits to development to reflect the developments already allowed and, hopefully, not to go beyond them. I shall keep my eye on what happens.

For the time being, this is good news for the future of the Forest, at least in the CBC section.

## Charnwood Forest Regional Park Stakeholders Group Meeting

Kim Turner, Paul Day, and myself, Dick, on behalf of FOCF attended the annual Stakeholders meeting at County Hall on 26th November 2015.

The meeting commenced with a presentation by Claire Install, LRWT, giving an update on the Charnwood Forest Living Landscape. Although this concept started in the UK in 2006, the Charnwood Forest project was launched in 2011 in partnership with Aggregate Industries. There are 21 Wildlife Trust Reserves within the Forest, comprising just over 8% of the total area. This compares with 1.3% for Leicestershire and Rutland.

The major focus in the future is to improve connectivity between wildlife site by creating wildlife corridors.

A major concern for Leicestershire, not just Charnwood, is that it has no Green Belt, or any area designated as of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 87% of the county is undesignated, the highest of any county in the UK.

The next presentation was an update from the Charnwood Forest R P Steering Group. In the last year they formulated an Action Plan for the next three years 2015 - 2017. The three key areas are,

- a) Tourism and the local economy
- b) Social and historical
- c) Environment

The Board recognise that although they wish to promote tourism at the same time they have a responsibility to protect the local environment. They wish to create more footpaths and

bridleways unfortunately mainly starting from Bradgate Park.

After this presentation there was a Break Out session to enable us to make comments about the Action Plan topics on behalf of FOCF. Our views were well covered in the Minutes.

Permission has been requested to publish the minutes on our website. They are not available at the moment as they are still in Draft form.

*Dick Howard*

## Living Landscape

There was a capacity attendance for our January meeting to hear a talk by Michael Jeeves, Head of Conservation at Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, on "Charnwood Forest, a living landscape".

Mr Jeeves gave a fascinating talk, copiously illustrated by colour photographs, tracing the Forest from its volcanic origins, 600 million years ago, to the present day. He showed how the landscape had developed, particularly in the last 6000 years. He dealt with the growth of population, from the first hunter-gatherers, through the development of farming and the Enclosures at the end of the 18th century.

He was particularly interested in the vast range of wildlife, from wolves and aurochs to the wild animals and birds of today. He had many beautiful pictures of flowers and trees within the Forest today.

Chairman Paul Day thanked Mr Jeeves for his fascinating talk and announced that the Friends of Charnwood Forest were providing new information boards for the Trust's sites at Charnwood Lodge and Lea Meadows.

The evening concluded with wine and nibbles whilst the members circulated to discuss the talk with each other and our speaker. *Peter Bertram*

### Who's Who?

**President** Janie Martin

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