Thames Chase

Thames Chase Newsletter **December** 2023

NEWS



A Wonderful Year

As the end of 2023 draws near, we take a moment to reflect on the many changes at Thames Chase Trust during the past 12 months. There is a renewed sense of community with many visitors exploring the Community Forest for the first time. We have held many successful events on site with lots of visitors, resulting in more engagement and positive feedback. We have launched some new events including Story & Rhyme Time for preschool children, Heritage Talks plus the Thames Chase Art Club all of which have proven to strengthen our varied activities programme.
We continue to work closely with our partners including Forestry England, working together to host 'Feel Good In The Forest' during the summer and January 2024 and a series of popular walks throughout the year.
We continue to recognise the great work that is carried out on a daily basis to help maintain the many aspects of the Thames Chase Community Forest by our wonderful volunteers, their continued dedication has been integral to our growth. The arrival of The Forest Centre Tea Room has also had a positive impact and has helped to create a sense of place and identity at the Visitor Centre. We thank Chris and the team for their support. Our Programmes Team are about to embark on a record number of tree planting projects over the coming months as part of the Trees For Climate scheme. We look forward to sharing their progress with you, along with lots more great news and events in 2024!

Woodland Workshop



We recently hosted an event in partnership with the Forestry Commission at the Thames Chase Forest Centre highlighting the benefits of tree planting and woodland creation. The workshop was aimed at farmers and landowners.
During the workshop guest speakers including Forestry Commission staff and Dave Bigden, Consultant Community Forest Director, Thames Chase Community Forest and members of our Programmes Team presented information on topics including:

- The benefits of tree planting, hedgerow and woodland creation
- Grants available for woodland creation including from the Forestry Commission and the Thames Chase Community Forest (Trees for Climate)
- Agroforestry
- An introduction to Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Thames Chase Deputy Community Forest Director Aisling Woodhead says "It was brilliant to work together in partnership to see the opportunities for woodland creation across the Community Forest"

Positivitree

Thames Chase had the pleasure of attending and donating a bird cherry tree for Thurrock Council's Aftercare Service's tree planting ceremony.
The aim of the ceremony was to celebrate and provide a symbol of the growth of the young people who are leaving care, the service, and it's ambitions to supporting young people who are care experienced.
It was a privilege for Thames Chase to donate and assist in planting the Postivitree and help highlight the invaluable work of the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum.





Reed Planting

Thames Chase Conservation Volunteers spent a great few days working at 'The Slack Bird Sanctuary' which is located in The Chase Local Nature Reserve, between Hornchurch and Dagenham. We are used to planting thousands of tree saplings but this task involved us planting 5000 Common Reed plug plants. The aim was to extend the existing reedbeds on site which is such important wildlife habitat in this area.
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham have received funding from Mayor of London Rewilding London Grant to deliver a range of conservation management practices to manage The Slack Bird Sanctuary to greatly improve and maintain the biodiversity of this wetland habitat. Thames Chase conservation volunteer Steve Green shot a great video which you can view by searching 'Thames Chase' on YouTube.com, showcasing our work. We look forward to seeing the fruits of our labour in the warmer months ahead.

Feel Good In The Forest

On 13 January 2024, come to a wellbeing day at Thames Chase Forest Centre and Broadfields to 'Feel Good in the Forest' with Forestry England and the Thames Chase Trust. You can Feel Good in the Forest by trying free taster sessions of yoga, a wildlife walk, a wellbeing and tree walk, or walking your dog on a group led dog walk around the community woodland. The day will also include children's craft activities and stallholders with information about local activities and support available from the wider health and wellbeing community.
The event aims to increase your activity, boost your resilience, find restoration and connection with nature, and feel more empowered and included. By enjoying a range of activities in nature on offer, including the new Forestry England self-led wellbeing trail, you can Feel Good in the Forest at Thames Chase. A timetable of events can be found at **www.thameschase.org.uk**



THAMES CHASE FOREST CENTRE
PIKE LANE
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WWW.THAMESCHASE.ORG.UK
TEL. 01708 642970

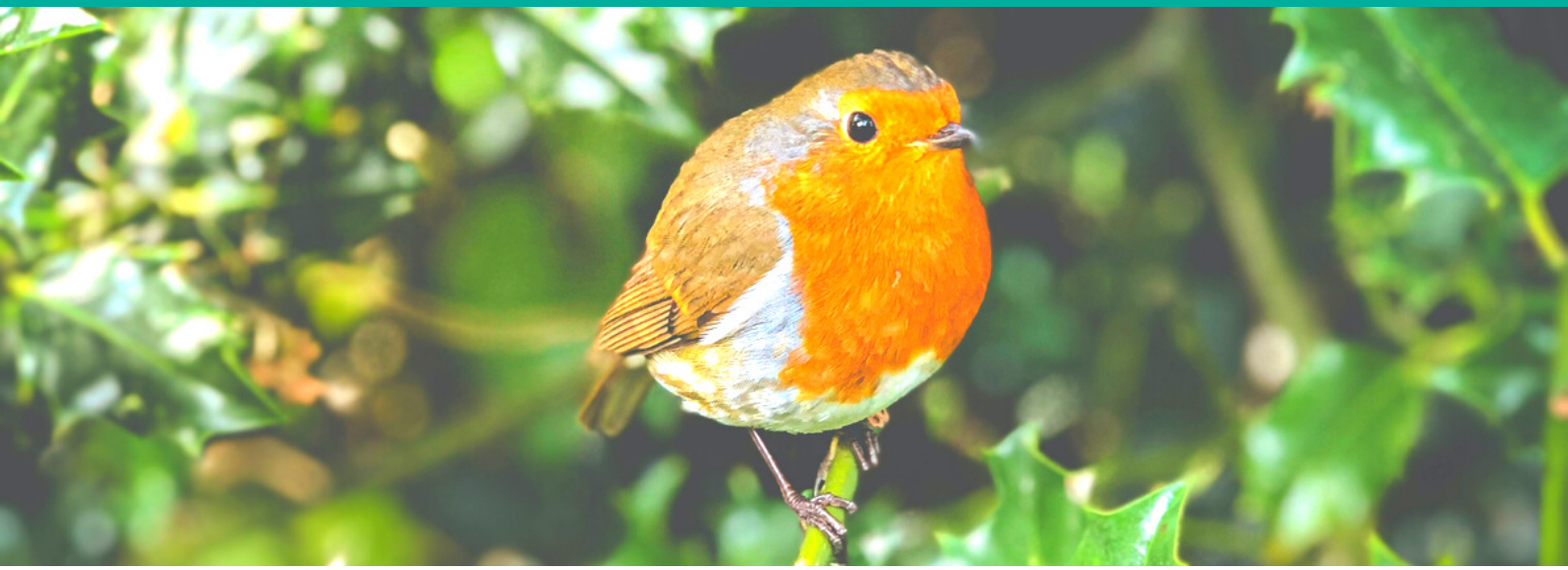
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EVENTS | DATES



Seasons Greetings

Before 2024 arrives we have a range of events planned throughout December to spread some festive cheer! Our final Guided Heritage Walk of 2023 takes place on December 1st which begins and ends at Thames Chase Forest Centre see full details below. Plus our final Thames Chase Art Club session for this year on Wednesday December 13th. Both activities will be returning in January.

This months main event is our Christmas Celebration on December 17th from 10am-3pm. There will be a selection of stalls and lots of fun arts and crafts to keep the little ones entertained. The Thames Chase Forest Centre Tea Room will also be open. We will be joined by a series of musical acts including: Harpist, Hilary Barkwith, Havering Music School Brass Orchestra and The Capella Singers of Upminster Choir singing Christmas Carols. There will also be a fun photo booth to capture your festive moments! Plus a very special visitor from the North Pole....We do hope you can join us.

All that remains is to say is a big thank you to our visitors, volunteers and staff for all their support this year.

We wish you all well this festive season and hope you have a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.

For more information about events and latest developments please call the visitor centre reception: 01708 642970 or visit our social media pages



Guided Heritage Walk

Our December walk will be from Thames Chase Visitor's Centre to St Mary Magdalene Church in North Ockendon which dates from about 1170 AD.

There will be an opportunity to explore the interesting churchyard, see the peaceful St Cedd's pond and spring and some of the interesting buildings in Church Lane.

We will walk back along peaceful downhill paths to return to the visitor's centre where you will be welcomed with a hot drink and a mince pie.

This walk is suitable for age 16 years and over.

Please wear suitable clothing.

Please note all timings are approximate depending on weather and amount of attendees. Parking and toilet facilities are available at Thames Chase.

Date: Friday December 1st

Time: 10.30am-1pm

Cost: £3.50 per person

Please book online via Eventbrite (Eventbrite.co.uk and search Thames Chase)

Music Evening

It's not just time to visit Santa in his grotto with his elves at Thames Chase It's also time to enjoy some seasonal music! Join us on Friday December 8th from 7.30pm.

Enjoy an evening of swing, blues, ballads, latin rhythms, seasonal music with an exciting Music Trio called 'Without Words'. There will be plenty of Christmas sparkle and well known seasonal songs including: Let it Snow, Winter Wonderland, The Christmas Song and many more!
Dorian Ford (piano) Dominic Ashworth (guitar); Alex Keen (double bass) and guest singer Jill Luff.

Cost £12, per person tickets available via the Thames Chase Visitor Centre (01708 642970) Please bring your own drinks and nibbles. Tea and coffee will be available.





Solstice Walk

Join us at Thames Chase for a a wellbeing and mindfulness walk to celebrate the shortest day of the year.
Come and celebrate the beauty of mother nature on Solstice day. This gentle walk will give you chance to be at one with the forest, enjoy nature in all its beauty and just have time for you.
Our lives can become so busy dealing with the 9-5 that sometimes we forget to relax, take stock and breathe.
Join us in the Forest Centre afterwards for a mince pie and a drink.
Please wear suitable clothing and footwear. Suggested donation £3 per person, please call the Thames Chase Forest Centre reception to express your interest: 01708 642970
Date: Thursday December 21st
Time: 5pm-8pm

Dates For Your Diary

- Guided Heritage Walk - Dec 1st
- Music Evening - Dec 8th
- Thames Chase Art Club - Dec 13th
- A Christmas Celebration - Dec 17th
- Winter Solstice Walk - Dec 21st
- January Guided Heritage Walk - Jan 5th
- Thames Chase Art Club - Jan 10th
- Feel Good In The Forest - Jan 13th
- January 2024 Monthly Sunday Market - Jan 21st

To find out more visit the Thames Chase website **www.thameschase.org.uk** or check social media



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