

COMMUNITY FOREST

Trust News

After many years of negotiation, the Trust has obtained a long lease on Broadfields Farm buildings to secure them as the operational Centre for the Community Forest. To retain the office building in the converted farm cottages, however, to house the Thames Chase and Forestry Commission staff, the building needs to be purchased. The Trust will need to raise the money within the next 5 years – a considerable challenge.

Catering at the Forest Centre

Again, now that the Trust have a full tenancy at the Forest Centre, permanent caterers can be appointed to support the Forest Centre in developing the facilities for visitors. The Trust is immensely grateful to the present caterers who stepped in after the original caterers left suddenly last autumn and have provided excellent cover for the past year. The tendering process is underway.

Forest Centre

Maintaining the historic farm buildings

With the lease comes the responsibility of caring for the grade 2 listed threshing barn and other historic building. This autumn, local builders, Coates Brothers, are repairing and treating the fabric of the barn. This work will continue when funding allows. This is where your support by using the Centre, its car park, café, rooms and shop helps maintain the operational centre of Thames Chase Community Forest.

Car Park Contribution back to just £1!

As promised, from the 1st November we return to a daily parking contribution of £1. This was the commitment the Trust made to our regular visitors when we had to increase the peak season charge in April. For just £1, you will be able to visit the forest centre and enjoy the outside green space of Broadfields, walk the various trails suitable for all abilities.

Cycle Hire update.

Cycle hire will be open daily from 10.30am to 4pm (last hire 3.30pm) during the October half term holiday, why not come and hire a bike!

Cycle hire is open at weekends until Sunday 30th October 2016 and daily from the 22nd to 30th October 2016 for half term.
The cycle hire will then be closed for the winter after a very successful season. We will be opening again in the spring of 2017.

Wendy Baker

Forest Centre Manager

THE EDITOR WRITES

Yet another milestone has been reached with the signing of the lease on the Forest Centre. However, with it comes the challenge of maintaining the stunning historic farm complex and Visitor Centre.

With the approach of the winter season, when there is less pressure on the car parks, the donation will revert to £1. The extra charge during the summer months helped to provide staffing to manage the busy holiday period.

Our volunteers have been extremely busy in the tree nursery, providing the walks programme and leaflets, running children's activities, producing music events and cream teas and not forgetting running the Visitor Centre and shop and all that entails. Hopefully you will join us in the busy autumn programme.

On a serious note, we have a considerable challenge ahead in retaining the offices for ourselves and the Forestry Commission at the Forest Centre. These will be essential if we are to expand our staffing to achieve the plans laid out in the Thames Chase Plan for the next ten years. Your help would be invaluable. Please see 'how to donate'.

Mary Wright
Trustee

Volunteers

Monitoring the Rivers

Throughout the year there has been an ongoing river monitoring project on the Ingrebourne and Beam/Rom Rivers with the Essex Wildlife Trust. This began with monitoring whether mink were present at the rivers as these are an invasive species that harm any rivers and the surrounding areas they occupy. Several rafts were positioned along the rivers and regularly checked for mink footprints. This was temporarily stopped over the summer because of the breeding season, but has now begun again.



We then extended to biological monitoring as this would give us (and the Environment Agency) valuable information about the status of our local rivers and help the drive to improve them. Kick sampling is being carried out monthly on several sites along the rivers to look for riverflies – which includes mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies – as these are very good indicators of water quality, and hence are sometimes described as 'the canary of our rivers'. The Ingrebourne and Beam Rom have now joined 80 other UK rivers which have riverfly monitoring in place.
For more information please contact Tony Gunton: tonygunton@icloud.com

Thames Chase Walks

Thames Chase Walking Group

The Thames Chase Walking Group is a small group of volunteers with a common interest of promoting walking throughout the Community Forest. This is achieved by leading guided walks throughout the Thames Chase area and also by creating high quality walking guides in leaflet or mobile App form.

Guided Walks: During 2016 the guided walks have been held on the 4th Friday of each month and have followed the 'coffee morning' theme of Discovering Thames Chase. These morning walks are between 4 and 5 miles and have covered many of the green spaces throughout Thames Chase including Cranham Marshes, Parklands, Stubbers, Tylers Common, Pages Wood, Harold Court Wood, Cely Wood, White Post Wood, Belhus Country Park, Warley Place, Davy Down, and Mardyke Woods. The final walk for this year will cover Dagenham Village and the Beam valley on Friday 28th October.

Walking Guides: The Thames Chase walking leaflets are proving more and more popular with individuals and local walking groups. In addition our reputation is spreading more widely with walking groups from north and west London recently visiting to enjoy our wonderful green spaces. New guides have been added to our portfolio including Davy Down to West Horndon, circular walks Pages Wood via Warley Place and Pages Wood/Harold Court Wood. Walking leaflets for Harold Hill and Dagenham and the Beam Valley are nearing completion and should be available shortly.

The walking group have lots of ideas for expanding the guides and would welcome additional help with creating these.

Finally a word of thanks to Dave and his teams of Thames Chase Conservation Volunteers who have done so much to improve our public footpaths. **Robert Stevenson, Volunteer**



Tree Nursery

Join us for the opening of our Tree Nursery!

Earlier this year Thames Chase received a £12000 grant from Tesco and Groundwork through their Bags of Help scheme, from the 5p bag charge, to regenerate our tree nursery. Since then lots of work has been carried out mainly by our Conservation Volunteers, constructing a new rabbit proof fence and gates, clearing the old raised beds and creating 10 new beds and installing a potting shed. The Nursery will become incorporated into the Thames Chase Environmental Education programme as a resource for students, volunteers, schools, youth groups and playschemes. As well as this the nursery will produce trees for projects and also sell to the local community. You are invited to join us on the opening day, Monday 24th October 11am-1pm, to plant a tree and talk to our volunteers about the nursery while enjoying tea and cake. There will also be children's activities. However, there is still more work to be done to make our nursery fully accessible for all to enjoy, such as leveling the ground and laying paths, creating a public area with a healthy living zone and putting in electricity to the potting shed. To be able to do this we need to raise more funds.



Aisling Woodhead, Project Support Officer

How to donate

- Online on the My Donate website: https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/thameschasecommunityforest
  - To Donate to the Tree Nursery: https://mydonate.bt.com/events/thameschasetreenursery/344190
- In the Thames Chase Forest Centre
- Telephone: 01708 642970
- Email: enquiries@thameschase.org.uk



Children's Activities

Children's Half Term Holiday Programme

Activities will be available on Tuesday and Wednesday 25th and 26th Oct between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

Activities will focus on the tree nursery and follow the theme of trees – seed collection and planting, tree identification, creatures that live in trees and craft activities using wood products.

Donations for activities towards resources and to support our tree nursery.

All children must be accompanied by an adult for all activities.
All the activities are produced by our volunteers.

Special days

Monday 24th October 11am – 1pm – Opening of our refurbished tree nursery

Come and plant a tree in the new beds in the tree nursery and join the celebration.

Thursday 27th October 10.30am-1.30pm –Pumpkin carving

Help us carve the pumpkins for the Ghost Walks evening or bring your own pumpkin to carve.

Upcoming Events

Apple Weekend 15th and 16th October

Join us for our annual celebration of local produce and traditional crafts.
Taste and make your choice from a range of ***English apples*** *and juices.*
Watch the spinner at work and have a go at willow weaving and corn dolly making
Enjoy the wood products from wood – turners, carvers and carpenters.
Enjoy the seasonal snacks and cakes from our onsite café.

Ghost Walks 29th October

Are you brave enough to take a 'Walk on the Wildside' in the forest at Hallowe'en ?
In groups of 15. Walks every 10mins.
Tickets: Family of four £20, Individual £6
Activities and food in the barn.
Activities during the day from 12 noon to 3pm for children under 6yrs.
No pushchairs, dogs or children under 6 yrs on evening walks, please.

14th Oct	Friday	2:30-4:30pm	Apple Cream tea	£8
15/16th Oct	Sat/Sun	10am-4pm each day	Apple Weekend – English apples to taste & for sale Country crafts and produce	Free entry
23rd Oct	Sunday	12noon -2.30pm	Hallowe'en make-up work shop	£3
24th Oct	Monday	11am-1pm	Official opening of the tree nursery – come and plant a tree	Free
25th /26th Oct	Tues/Wed	10.30am-12.30pm	Children's holiday activities	Donation
27th Oct	Thursday	10.30am-12.30pm	Pumpkin carving for Ghost Walks evening	Donation
28th Oct	Friday	From 10am	Historic walk round Dagenham Village	£3
29th Oct	Saturday	5-8.25pm	Ghost Walks – admission by ticket only	Individual £6 Family £20
11th Nov	Friday	10:30-12noon	Discovering Thames Chase Coffee Morning	Free
18th Nov	Friday	2:30-4:30pm	Cream tea	£8
20th /21st Nov	Sat/Sun	10am-2pm	Pre-Christmas fair – produce & craft stalls	Free
25th Nov	Friday	From 10am	Guided walk to be arranged	£3
27th Nov	Sunday	11am.-1pm	British Light Music Classics illustrative talk	£8
9th Dec	Friday	10:30-12noon	Discovering Thames Chase Coffee Morning	Free
11th Dec	Sunday		Christmas celebration- Christmas traditions and carols	Free
16 th Dec	Friday	2:30-4:30pm	Christmas cream tea	£8
18th Dec	Sunday	10am-2pm	Christmas Market – produce & craft stalls. Live Christmas music	Free

For more information and to make bookings please ring
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