

Friends groups helping support Greenwood Community Project

A network of Friends groups across Nottinghamshire has benefited from funding and support from the Greenwood Community Forest Partnership, allowing them to better look after, improve and promote local green spaces.

The Greenwood Community Forest is managed by a partnership featuring staff from Nottinghamshire County Council and supported by five district and borough councils and a range of other organisations including Groundwork, Natural England and The Forestry Commission.

Nottinghamshire County Council's Culture Committee discussed the work of the Partnership over 2012-13 at its meeting last week at County Hall. The committee heard that over the last year, Greenwood Community Partnership had enjoyed the following successes:

- Delivering a community planting scheme that resulted in 165 trees being planted by around 142 participants
- Organising a range of events including support to two significant public events, 'Time Travel Trent Vale' 2012 and 'Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood', May 2013
- Supporting 35 Friends, conservation and walking for health groups to help improve, care for and promote the use of local green spaces.

Friends groups are typically made up of local residents who look after a much loved green space within their own community. As well as benefiting this area for all, it gives people a great purpose, opportunities to socialise, develop key skills and to enjoy exercise and fresh air.

Councillor John Knight, Culture Committee Chairman at Nottinghamshire County Council said: "There is some great work which goes on across the county to support the Greenwood Community Forest among the network of Friends groups in a huge number of local communities. The Greenwood Community Forest team will look at working even more closely with this network to seek external funding sources for projects to provide financial sustainability."

The team has already supported the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum to bid for funds for further promotion and development of the Forum.

Here are some selected case studies of some of the Friends Groups in the county:

Ashfield District:

The Friends of Kings Mill Reservoir – Set up to help promote the conservation and biodiversity of King's Mill Reservoir, the group works with a range of partner agencies and has campaigned for litter bins and other improvements in the area, as well as organising number of events each year. There are opportunities to litter pick and work with members of the Mill Adventure Base to clean the reservoir bed during the year. This group has around 14 active members and was set up in 1997. The group's spokesman Pam Hallam said: "We have a Spring Flower Walk taking place on June 1 – we would love to have some new members, especially younger people to get involved."

Broxtowe District:

The Friends of Collier's Wood – Based at the former Moorgreen Colliery, which was referenced as Minton Pit by DH Lawrence in Sons and Lovers. , Moorgreen produced more than one million tons of coal a year as recently as the 1960s. After landscaping it was renamed Collier's Wood, and as part of Nottinghamshire's Greenwood Community Forest, wetlands, ponds and trees and shrubbery have been introduced. The group gets involved in habitat development work, community events and projects. Its emphasis is always to encourage site visitors by developing a variety of activities for a wide age range, especially those that encourage healthy lifestyles and social responsibility. This group was founded in 1999 and has around 16 active members. Secretary Bob Turner said: "We do quite a lot of fundraising and one of the most successful schemes was a community lottery which was a great success, but we are always keen to look for other funding opportunities." For more details visit: www.friendsofcollierswood.org.uk

Mansfield District and Newark and Sherwood District:

The Friends of Thynghowe – Working hard to promote an ancient Viking assembly site which borders the parishes of Warsop, Edwinstowe and Clipstone, the group champions the rich archaeology of the area based around the western edge of Sherwood, and organises events. Last year, it held a guided walk along the Warsop boundary to the site of Thynghowe, investigated the old Cabin Pool within the forest, has uncovered old trackways, known as 'gates', such as Nether Warsop Gate and Gleadthorpe Gate, and hosted a major re-enactment weekend at Sherwood Pines. This group was founded in 2006 and has around 44 active members. Steering Group Member Steve Horne said: "The group is keen to try to raise funding for further work to explore the assembly site further and seek new members." For more details visit: www.thynghowe.org.uk

Mansfield District:

The Maun Conservation Group – this group promotes the hidden gems of wildlife along the River Maun, including Oakham Nature Reserve, Quarry Lane Nature Reserve and Titchfield Park.

Group Secretary Sarah Spurry said: "We have a rich wildflower meadow which in summer has numerous kinds of orchids, a wetland scrape with frogs, newts and invertebrates and a thriving water vole population. Our aim is to continue to improve the site for wildlife and for the enjoyment of the local community. We have raised funds from a variety of sources which has helped with a number of projects, and the support of the county council and Greenwood Community Forest is vital for networking and support."

This group has around 20 active members and works with a range of different community groups including five primary schools, Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Mansfield Sea Cadets and the Mansfield and Ashfield Wildlife Watch Group. Visit: www.maunconservation.org

Anyone wishing to find out about the Friends groups in their own area can contact Greenwood Community Forest team, via email: greenwood@nottscc.gov.uk and telephone: 0115 9696518.

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