

Friends of Hopwas Wood

Issue Number 11

March 2013

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is due to be held on **TUESDAY 30th. APRIL 2013** commencing at **8.00 p.m.** at the Coton and Hopwas Social Club, School Lane, Hopwas. The meeting will elect the committee for the coming year and reports will be presented for the past year including an update of current activities affecting the Wood. It is important that there is a good attendance by Members so that views can be aired and the current working of the Friends discussed to ensure that the elected committee has a clear mandate for action.

In accordance with the Constitution nominations for Members of the Committee should be submitted to the Secretary 72 hours before the meeting and supported by at least two Members and bear the signature of the person nominated indicating their willingness to stand.

Following the business part of the meeting there will be a talk about Alvecote Wood by Sarah Walters and Stephen Briggs owners of the wood. It is located off Robeys Lane near the historic site of Alvecote Priory and classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. Their web site is www.alvecotewood.co.uk and well worth a visit.



Alvecote Wood

Committee Activities

The Committee has met on three occasions in the last year to discuss matters relating to the Wood. However the passing of Judith Marshall in August was a sad period for us all. She is greatly missed as a valued friend and colleague of the Wood Committee. The main matters discussed have been membership, the web site, the notice board and importantly the proposed thinning works both on Tarmac's land and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) land. This was reported

in the August Newsletter and our concerns were raised with both Tarmac and the MoD. With respect to the MoD the Committee have had regular contact with their Regional Head Forester who has confirmed that their thinning programme has been postponed until he is satisfied that it would be in the long term interest of the wood as part of an agreed long term management plan. As many of you are aware, Tarmac commenced thinning works in October and these have now been completed. In November members of the Committee met on site with Tarmac representatives to see what the thinning programme entailed. Since the completion of the works concerns have been raised regarding the condition of the tracks through the wood as a result of the heavy vehicles on what was very wet ground. Tarmac has confirmed that they will be carrying out remedial work to level the tracks when the weather conditions allow. Within the last couple of weeks replacement tree planting has been undertaken by the company within an area that was historically clear-felled but replacement planting at the time failed. Since the beginning of this year Tarmac entered into a joint venture with Lafarge however this will have no impact on the ongoing management of the woodland. If anyone has concerns or queries they should contact Nick Atkins, Estate Manager. T.01902382083; M.07702635323; E-mail. Nick.Atkins@tarmac.co.uk



The Committee has raised concern over the fact that the work that has been carried out does not comply with the licence issued by the Forestry Commission. The response from Nick Atkins was:

"I have referred this matter back to Jim Unwin as we have acted entirely on his professional advice. I attach copy of the complete email chain from which you will see that Jim has acknowledged that he made an arithmetical error on the table setting out the number of trees to be felled. As you will see from the email chain, this error has been discussed with the Forestry Commission and you will see that they have acknowledged that they should have spotted the mistake. They go on to further acknowledge that they have no issues with the felling works that have occurred and notwithstanding the arithmetic error on the licence do not believe that a contravention of the licence intentions has been committed."

This was not the Committee's view and the matter may still be taken up with the Commission.

Minerals Core Strategy

Staffordshire County Council has now considered a report into the preparation of a new Minerals Local Plan. The new Plan, when adopted, will replace their current plan. The new Plan will set out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for future mineral related development within Staffordshire over the next 15 years.

Work on a replacement Minerals Local Plan started in 2005 but was deferred in 2009 to allow progress to be made in preparing the Joint Waste Local Plan. The Waste Local Plan is now nearing adoption and work has now recommenced on preparing a new Minerals Local Plan.

The proposed timetable is:

Timetable

Prepare the Local Aggregate Assessment, the Statement of Community Involvement and the Scoping Report: March to June 2013

Notify key participants on commencement of Plan July 2013

Consult on Draft Minerals Local Plan November 2013

Representation period on proposed submission (draft) September 2014

Submission to the Secretary of State January 2015

This will be discussed at the AGM but if you want to read the recent report on the matter please visit <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/planning/policy/mineralscorestrategy/home.aspx>

Wild about Tamworth

Wild about Tamworth is a joint initiative between Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Tamworth Borough Council, involving local people in improving the wild spaces of Tamworth for both people and wildlife. An annual "Wild about Tamworth" event is held every summer in the Castle Grounds which the Friends have attended for a number of years. This year is their 10th Anniversary and the event is being held on Saturday 3rd August between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. and the Friends will be having a stall to promote our activities. If you are interested in getting involved please let the Committee know.



Membership & Subscriptions

Following the request for the payment of subscriptions in September, and as in previous years, there are still a number of members who have not paid their subscription. The membership and setting subscriptions for this year will be discussed at the AGM. As a consequence the Constitution has been checked and it is unclear as to the status of a Member if they have not paid their subscription the matter will therefore be discussed at the AGM so that the matter can be clarified and the Constitution amended accordingly.

Web Site

As you are aware from the last Newsletter we have now set up a web site and acquired a domain name of friendsofhopwaswood.co.uk. The site has a number of pages as follows: Home, About Us, History, News, Newsletters, Photos, Apply for Membership, and Constitution. The News page is a key part of the site as it provides details of activities as they occur. Please have a look at the site and let us know what you think at the AGM.



Feedback

It is hoped that this newsletter has been informative and a further newsletter will be published in the Summer. The Committee would welcome any comments and views from Members and these can be forwarded to any Committee Member.

Current Committee Members

Chairman: Ray Vanstone
(rayvanstone@btinternet.com)
Vice Chairman: Lorna Bushell
Secretary: Barbara Stubbs
Treasurer: Martin Handley
Tom Jackson